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OF THE

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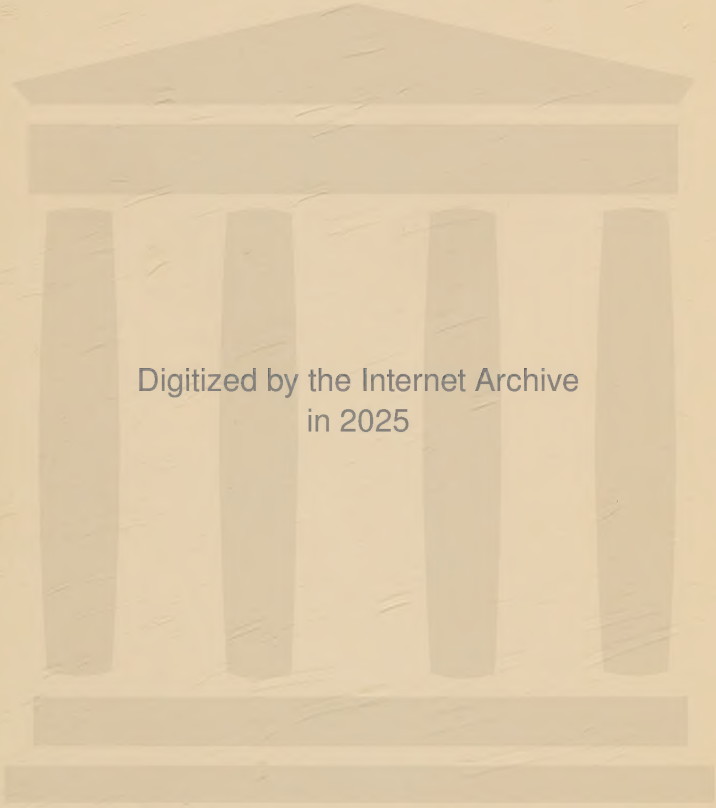
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SIR THOMAS URQUHART

SCOTTISH PROSE

OF THE

SEVENTEENTH & EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

BEING A COURSE OF LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW IN 1912

BY

JOHN HEPBURN MILLAR, M.A.

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AUTHOR OF "A LITERARY HISTORY OF SCOTLAND"

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PREFACE

In his article on Professor John Millar in the *Edinburgh Review*[1] Jeffrey distinguishes between the conversational style appropriate to lectures and the more formal manner of writing adapted to the purposes of publication. The great merit of the former, he points out, consists "in its varying and judicious adaptation to the taste and situation of the hearers, and in the facility and animation with which everything is communicated and explained. In addressing the public and posterity, however, no adaptation of this kind can take place: a greater reserve must be assumed; our positions must be fortified with greater care, and our conclusions enforced with more authority. In the deliberation and anxiety that necessarily accompany these operations, the spirit of our first conceptions and the colouring of our original language are apt

[1] Vol. iii. p. 154 at p. 155.

to fly off: we are afraid to commit our dignity among strangers by the use of a familiar or a ludicrous expression: we put our ideas into a dress of ceremony, and feel the oppression and constraint of it the more for having been accustomed to the ease and lightness of a less cumbrous drapery."

Premising the elimination of the complimentary epithets, I have ventured to take the hint thus proffered by the first of British critics, and have therefore not translated the substance of the following sheets from the one dialect into the other. The lectures were delivered in the University of Glasgow during the past winter, and they now appear to all intents and purposes in the form in which they actually were delivered, with the addition of a tolerably full apparatus of references and an index. They will not have been given wholly in vain, and they may to some extent fulfil the purpose of the anonymous founder of the Lectureship, if they stimulate the curiosity of some youthful enquirer, and tempt him to investigate in greater detail the disappearance of Scots prose as a literary medium during the seventeenth, and the contribution of Scots writers of the

second as well as of the first rank to English thought and style during the eighteenth, century.

I should like to add a word of sincere thanks for the kindness I received from many persons connected either directly or indirectly with the University during the delivery of the course.

J. H. M.

EDINBURGH, 28*th May*, 1912.

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I.

THE NIGHTMARE OF THE COVENANT: HISTORIANS: JOURNAL-WRITERS: DEVOTIONAL AUTHORS.

I.

The habit of breaking up political and literary history into divisions corresponding to the centuries of our reckoning is so well established as to call for no apology. Not only is it convenient as ministering to the frailty of human memory, but also, by a curious stroke of luck, the compartment or period of time often coincides roughly with a complete series of action or a definite movement of thought. The Union of the Crowns and the Union of the Parliaments—such conspicuous landmarks in the history of Scotland—both took place in the first decade of a century, nor will the future historian fail to note that the Victorian era closed within a month of the opening of the century in which we are now living. Assuming then the propriety of grouping events and ideas in accordance with this familiar if not strictly scientific method, I

suppose that, if we were asked to throw overboard the English literature of every age excepting one, it would be the literature of the seventeenth century which, waiving personal preferences and prejudices, and giving due weight to the bulk of competent opinion, we should feel bound to retain. Much would have to be abandoned that we could ill spare. Not without a pang would we sacrifice the prose of Johnson and Fielding, or the prose and poetry of Scott. But we could scarcely have the hardihood to prefer any other to the era which gave us the best of Shakespeare and the Jacobean dramatists, the works both in poetry and prose of Milton, and the satire and criticism of Dryden.

When we turn, however, to that corner of the vineyard with which we are more particularly concerned, it is a very different scene that meets the eye. Not merely can we point to no name comparable to those I have just mentioned, but we have scarcely any writer who stands on the same level as the numerous practitioners in prose and verse of all but the highest rank who flourished in the period which extends from the accession of James VI.

to the throne of England down to the death of William III. There is very likely a reason for this, though I confess I am often sceptical about the chains of cause and effect so neatly forged in our educational workshops. The game of "consequences" as played by historians and critics is beautifully simple, and has been brought to a high pitch of perfection. Nothing baffles their sagacity; they are astute *rerum cognoscere causas*. But they have never taught any one to predict, except in the vaguest way, and the vaticinations of the most experienced sage may be falsified in the most surprising manner. If, accordingly, we are asked, Why in the seventeenth century was Scotland so barren and England so fertile in the field of letters? it behoves us to abstain from dogmatism, and to adject to our answer the necessary cautions and qualifications. Yet it is impossible to resist the cogency of the explanation which will spring to everybody's lips, that an unvarying atmosphere of venomous political and religious controversy is not propitious to the maturing of the kindlier fruits of the intellect, and that the incessant practice of acrimonious wrangling does not

keep a man's eye or hand in for more agreeable exercises.

It may be said that in England bitter strife raged about precisely the same matters. So it did. But, notwithstanding the rebellion and the usurpation, it did not cut so deep into the national life, which resumed its normal course at the Restoration. The English are essentially a good-natured and a well-fed people, or used so to be. Above all, they were not responsible for that crowning piece of wickedness and folly, the Solemn League and Covenant, which brooded like a nightmare over North Britain for close on half a century, and which may be compendiously described, in Mrs. Lirriper's immortal formula, as "fruitful hot water for all parties." Of the insane project of thrusting that precious document by the arm of the flesh upon an unwilling neighbour, the less said the better.

Upon the writings of those who took part in the fray I do not propose to dwell. They do not make easy reading, and it is perhaps difficult to cast one's self into the right frame of mind to do justice to them. It is well, however, to bear steadily in view that, so far

as Scotland was concerned, the *de quo* was rather the *jus divinum* of Presbytery than the *jus divinum* of Episcopacy. The supporters of the Presbyterian side were not merely attacking another system ; they were not merely assuming a negative attitude ; they were affirming the divine right of Presbyterian church government and order against the world : against Episcopalians on the one hand, but not less vehemently against sectaries on the other. Gillespie, in Wodrow's phrase, "mauled" the sectaries, and warmly repudiated the suggestion that the occasional meeting of some presbyters in Westminster Hall or upon the Exchange or in a journey or at a burial was a presbytery with powers to lay on hands.[1] Of the famous trio who, with others, represented the Kirk at the Westminster Assembly of Divines, I cannot help thinking that Gillespie was the ablest. At all events, *Aaron's Rod blossoming*, which appeared in 1646, seems to me the best of all such works as I have tried to read, being written in a thoroughly clear, business-like style. As for the Episcopal party, it did not want for worthy champions

[1] Gillespie, *Works*, ed. Hetherington, 1846, ii. 187.

either. The "Aberdeen Doctors," who, as Baillie testifies, were "the learnedest without question of our opposites,"[1] should never be forgotten for their stout resistance to Presbyterian tyranny, and the three Forbeses were men whose learning and skill were such as any cause might be proud of. Perhaps the most curious feature in all these divines was their whole-hearted belief in the power of dialectic to convince if not to convert. Theirs was precisely the mental attitude of Mr. James Wood, minister of St. Andrews, who, as Lamont records in his *Diary*,[2] conducted a public dispute in Cupar kirk during the usurpation with Mr. Brown, an anabaptist preacher to Fairfax's regiment of foot. In the glorious flush of controversial youth they revelled in "the tart vinegar of contention," as Sir George Mackenzie calls it,[3] and they would have groaned at the famous advocate's conclusion that "seeing man cannot be convinced by miracles, it were ridiculous to press conversion by argument."[4]

History affords a very convenient method

[1] *Letters and Journals*, i. 97.
[2] *Diary*, 48.
[3] *Works*, i. 51.
[4] *Ib.* 42.

of carrying on controversy, and, I hasten to add, a perfectly legitimate one, given common honesty in the writer. Hume of Godscroft has some very pertinent remarks on this head in the prefatory address to the reader in his *History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*, published in 1644. Without the historian's judgments on men's actions, he says, history "were little better than an old wife's tale." All men not being judicious, it is absolutely necessary, he opines, "that those who read carelessly and sleepingly may be awaked; who mind only pleasure may have profit thrust upon them: that the dull may be quickened, and the judicious have his judgment sharpened, and a finer edge put upon it by this whetstone." To these sentiments I would venture respectfully to subscribe, merely repeating the proviso that the historian must neither suppress nor distort essential facts. It seems to me that most of the historians of the seventeenth century fulfil this condition. None of them affects an impartiality to which he has no valid title, but none of them is a deliberate liar. And even if it were otherwise, the forces *hinc inde* are evenly enough

balanced, and counteract one another. If Presbytery can boast its Calderwood, its Kirkton, and its Law, Episcopacy may glory in its Spottiswoode, its Spalding, and its Gordon.

Mr. David Calderwood, sometime minister of Crailing, was born in 1575 and died in 1650. To him the Kirk was indebted for that storehouse of Presbyterian ammunition, the *Altare Damascenum*, which appeared in 1625. But he seems to have outlived his high reputation, for in the later years of his life he bored even the General Assembly by his "unruly humour" and "unpleasant utterance,"[1] and sufferance rather than respect became his portion. That he was of a cross-grained temperament seems certain—peevish to the point of cantankerousness; but the very qualities which rendered it difficult for his brethren to get on with him lend an undeniable flavour to his narrative, and call to mind the work of Mr. John Knox.

He selected for his theme *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, "beginning at Mr. Patrick Hamilton and ending with the death of James

[1] Baillie's *Letters*, iii. 21.

Sixt,"[1] and he spared no pains in its composition and in collecting illustrative documents. He follows the chronological order of events, and incidents such as earthquakes and the birth of monsters are duly recorded. For the marvellous he has the taste of his time, and, à propos of kneeling at the Communion, declines to pass over in silence how that when John Lauder, minister at Cockburnspath, was reaching the bread till a kneeling communicant, a black dogge start up, to snatch it out of his hand.[2] We can all form a pretty shrewd guess as to the identity of that "black dogge" in Mr. David's mind. He has a peculiarly happy gift of dialogue. For example take his spirited account of the "row," if we may venture so to call it, in the Kirk Session of Edinburgh with Mr. John Mein,[3] whom Livingstone describes in his *Memorable Characteristics* as a "solid and stedfast professor of the truth of God."[4] Or take his report of the conference and reasoning between the nineteen-year-old king and Mr. James

[1] Ed. Thomson, Wodrow Society, 8 vols. 1842-49.

[2] *History*, vii. 360. [3] *Ib.* 361.

[4] *Select Biographies*, Wodrow Society, 2 vols. 1845-7, i. 344.

Gibson, minister of Pencaitland, held at Linlithgow in presence of the Council.[1] The debate is admirable, and so is the vignette of the royal youth "playing Rex, scorning and taunting all, boasting the poor and bragging the rich; triumphing over the ministers, and calling them lownes, smaicks, seditious knaves, and so furth."[2]

Against this we may set the equally graphic sketch of Andrew Melville at his interview with the monarch. "After they entered in his cabinet, [the king] began to speak gentlie to Mr. Andrew; but when he began to tuiche matters, Mr. Andrew brake out in his wounted maner, so that the King and he were heard for the space of ane houre by all that were in the house and the closs."[3] No historical work, perhaps, gives us so clear an idea of the extraordinary treatment which the king met with at the hands of the ministers. When "eminent theologues" were not preaching *at* him, they were conferring *with* him, in the honest hope no doubt of convincing him of his errors, while he for his part seems to have cherished the equally honest and vain hope of

[1] *History*, iv. 484 *et seq.* [2] *Ib.* 489. [3] *Ib.* v. 629.

convincing them. Mr. Andrew Melville, Mr. James Lawson, Mr. Robert Bruce, Mr. Walter Balcanquhal, Mr. Patrick Galloway, Mr. John Howieson, Mr. John Cowper, Mr. David Black, Mr. Robert Wallace—these are the names of some whose chief occupation and delight seem to have lain in "rebooking" their sovereign. The worm turned at last in 1596, the very year in which the Kirk of Scotland came to her perfection, so that her beauty was admirable to foreign kirks. "The Assemblies of the Sancts were never more glorious nor profitable to every one of the true members thereof than in the beginning of this year."[1] In the General Assembly "the King granted he was a sinner, as other men were, but not infected he trusted with anie grosse sinne, and therefore required that no preacher would inveigh against him or his council publictly, but to come to him or them privilie, and tell what is the offence; and as for himself if he mended not in case he were guilty they might deal publictlie; his chamber door should be made patent to the meanest minister in Scotland; there sould not be anie meane

[1] *Ib.* 387.

gentleman in Scotland more subject to the good order and discipline of the Kirk than he would be."[1] The king's request seems not unreasonable; and it is certain that the power of the ministers thereafter diminished till the folly of Charles I. gave the signal for the work of the "second reformation" to begin.

We miss the bracing twang of Calderwood in the page of John Spottiswoode, Archbishop of St. Andrews (b. 1565, d. 1639). He too takes the Church of Scotland for his subject, but his work,[2] though it ends at the same date as his contemporary's, professes to cover much more ground, starting in fact with "the first time of planting of the Christian faith in this kingdom." What he lacks, however, in incisiveness he makes up for in dignity. His prepossessions in questions of church and state do not prevent him from doing justice to those whose views run contrary to his own, and the tribute he pays to George Buchanan is more than just, it is generous.[3] He is a master of simple, unaffected narrative, and his

[1] *History*, v. 397.

[2] Ed. Russell, Spottiswoode Society, 3 vols. 1847-51.

[3] *History*, ii. 299.

account of Queen Mary's execution[1] could scarcely be improved upon, while the brief character of that unfortunate lady with which it concludes says in a few lines practically all that is to be said about her. "This was the end of Queen Mary's life," it runs; "a princess of many rare virtues, but crossed with all the crosses of fortune, which never any did bear with greater courage and magnanimity to the last. Upon her return from France for the first two or three years she carried herself most worthily, but then giving ear to some wicked persons, and transported with the passion of revenge for the indignity done her in the murder of David Rizzio, her secretary, she fell into a labyrinth of troubles, which forced her to flee into England, where, after nineteen years' captivity, she was put to death in the manner you have heard."[2]

Equally to the purpose are his remarks upon that favourite habit of the "godly" of detecting the finger of an avenging Providence in the calamities of their opponents. After recounting the story of Andrew Melville's end at Sedan, where for some considerable time

[1] *Ib.* ii. 358 *et seq.* [2] *Ib.* ii. 361.

he had lain bedridden with the gout, he adds: "Whilst I am writing this there cometh to my mind the hard and uncharitable dealing that he and his faction used towards Patrick, [Adamson] sometime Archbishop of St. Andrews: who, not content to have prosecuted that worthy man in his life, made him a long time after his death the subject of their sermons, interpreting the miseries whereunto he was brought to be the judgment of God inflicted upon him for withstanding their courses of discipline. If now one should take the like liberty, and say that God, to whom the bishop at dying did commend his cause, had taken a revenge of him who was the chief instrument of his trouble, it might be as probably spoken and with some more likelihood, than that which they blasted forth against the dead Bishop. But away with such rash and bold conceits: the love of God either to causes or persons is not to be measured by these external and outward accidents."[1] It would have been well had the spokesmen of the Presbyterians taken this sentiment to heart. But for long they remained incor-

[1] *History*, iii. 183.

rigible. And, indeed, why should they hearken to a prelate on such a matter if they ignored the express warning of their Heavenly Master? Wodrow had learned better in the next century: for "we ought," he writes, "to be very sparing in making particular peremptory consequences from Providence."[1]

Mr. James Kirkton (1620-1699), minister at Merton, and Mr. Robert Law (d. 1689), minister at East Kilpatrick, are not such heavy metal as Calderwood or the Archbishop, but they are by no means to be contemned. Both were in all probability "antedeluvians"; both had "seen the glory of the former temple"; and we owe the publication of both their narratives to the same thoroughly competent, and thoroughly unsympathetic, editor. Kirkton deals with the *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the year 1678*.[2] A strong Presbyterian, he refused the Indulgence, but preached in Edinburgh under the toleration of James VII., and survived the Revolution settlement for a period of ten years, during most part of which he officiated in the Tolbooth church.

[1] *Apud* Kirkton, p. 365 *n*. [2] Ed. C. K. Sharpe, 1817.

"It is the honesty of an historian," he observes, "to write the naked truth whatever his censure may be,"[1] and he is nothing if not candid. He admits that, about the time of the abortive Pentland rising, "the curates' auditories were reasonable throng; the body of the people in most places in Scotland waited upon their preachings";[2] and he has known "some profane people, if they had committed ane error at night thought affronting a curat to-morrow a testimony of their repentance."[3] He verily believes "there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time [the Cromwellian usurpation] than in any season since the Reformation, tho' of treeple its duration," and that notwithstanding the General Assembly was not allowed to sit.[4] In this view he is abundantly confirmed by Law, who testifies to the saving work of conversion going on between 1652 and 1660, "occasioned through ministers preaching nothing all that time but the gospel, and had left off to preach up parliaments, armies, leagues, resolutions, and remonstrances which was much in use before."[5]

[1] *Secret History*, 179. [2] *Ib.* 221. [3] *Ib.* 163.
[4] *Ib.* 54. [5] *Memorials*, 7.

Yet Kirkton cannot help looking back wistfully to the two years between 1649 and 1651 as the best that Scotland ever saw. Presbyterial visitations of congregations were held frequently, "that they might see how the vine flourished and how the pomegranate budded." In that happy time, he assures us, "there was no case nor question in the meanest family in Scotland but it might become the object of the deliberation of the General Assembly, for the congregational Session's book was tried by the Presbytery, the Presbytery's book by the Synod, and the Synod's book by the General Assembly. Likewayes, as the bands of the Scottish Church were strong, so her beauty was bright: no error was so much as named, the people were sound in the faith but innocently ignorant of unsound doctrine; no scandalous person could live, no scandal could be concealed in all Scotland, so strict a correspondence there was betwixt ministers and congregations. The General Assembly seemed to be the priest both Urim and Thummim, and there were not ane hundred persons in all Scotland to oppose their conclusions: all submitted, all learned, all prayed, most part were

really godly, or at least counterfitted themselves Jews. Then was Scotland a heap of wheat set about with lilies, uniform, or a palace of silver beautifully proportioned; and this seems to me to have been Scotland's high noon."[1]

There was only one blot in the landscape. "I confess I thought at the time the common sort of ministers strained too much at the sin which in these days was called malignancy (and I should not paint the moon faithfully," he hastens to add, "if I marked not her spots): otherwayes I think, if church officers could polish the saints on earth as bright as they are in heaven, it were their excellency and the Church's happiness."[2] Rarely has a grinding system of ecclesiastical tyranny been depicted in such faithful and at the same time glowing colours. But so delightful a state of matters, when every one knew every one else's private affairs and peccadillos, was obviously too good to last long.

The point of view of Mr. Robert Law, whose *Memorials*[3] cover the memorable things that fell out in this island of Great Britain from 1638 to 1684, is very similar to Mr.

[1] *Secret History*, 49. [2] *Ib.* 50. [3] Ed. C. K. Sharpe, 1818.

Kirkton's. Though not apparently an "indulged" minister, he is at least as moderate in his views, and he severely criticises the teaching of the younger and wilder men who preach to the congregations that they should not pay cess or stent, "which is contrar to the doctrine of the gospel,"[1] or advocate the principle that a tyrannous king may be killed by private persons. M'Ward incurs his condemnation for urging his acquaintances "to discountenance the indulged brethren and not to hear them preach nor receive the sacraments from them."[2]

Never were the extreme Covenanters more calmly and completely exposed. If a modern historian dared to use such language, he would be denounced, not for his untruthfulness (for that does not so much matter), but for his failure to provide the Scottish people with "what they want." The passage is the better worth quoting. "These ministers," says Law, "that stirred up the people pretended they were the only pure and sound Presbyterians in the land, with these that followed them; and all other ministers and people, whether

[1] *Memorials*, 142. [2] *Ib.* 153.

indulged or not indulged, that did not follow their way were apostate and backsliders from the truth, and this they stood not on to preach and say: Whereas there was never any among the prelates pretended to more authority and practised more prelatick practices than these did: for they disowned the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, run upon ministers' charges at will, made rents and divisions among the people, and made it their work to separate them from their ministers and the congregational assemblies, and gloried when their principles took any footing in the land; and indeed they gained upon the unsolid and unstable professors more than could have been expected."[1]

Law is a little wider in the range of events he notices than Kirkton. He solemnly records the first visit of an elephant to Scotland, which took place, I am happy to say, in Glasgow in 1681. It appears that that animal, of which he gives a minute description, when it drinks, "sucks up the water with its trunk which holds a great dale of water, and then, putting the low end of the trunk in its mouth by

[1] *Memorials*, 156.

wynding it in, it jaes in the water in its mouth as from a great spout."[1] Also, he has a nice taste in the supernatural. He tells anecdotes of people's dogs howling and yelling and "youphing" lamentably when the people are going to die.[2] And he recounts an exceedingly choice tale of *diablerie*, with which I must conclude what I have to say about this excellent man.

Certain articles of silverwork having been stolen from the house of Major-General Montgomerie, "Eggletoun's brother," at Irvine, they blame a servant woman.

"The lass, being innocent, takes it ill, and tells them if she should raise the divil, she should know who took these things that were missed, which they let pass lightly as a rash word. But she being resolute was as good as her word; and on a day goes down to a laigh cellar, takes the Bible with her, and draws a circle about her, and turns a riddle on end twice from south to north, or from the right to the left hand, having in her hand nine feathers, which she pulled out of the tail of a black cock; and having read the 51st psalm forward, she reads backward chap. 9. ver. 19 of the Book of the Revelation: he appears in a seaman's clothing with a blew cape, and asks what she would: she puts one question to

[1] *Ib.* 177. [2] *E.g.* 224.

him and he answers it, and she casts three of the feathers at him, charging him to his place again: then he disappears at this time. He seemed to her to rise out of the earth to the middle body. She reads again the same verse backward the second time, and he appears the second time rising out of the ground with one leg above the ground. She asks a second question, and she casts other three feathers at him, charging him to his place. He again disappears. She reads again the third time the same verse backward, and he appears the third time with his whole body above ground (the last two times in the shape of a black grim man in black cloathing, and the last time with a long tail). She asks a third question at him, and casts the last three feathers at him, charging him to his place, and he disappears. The Major-General and his lady being above stairs, though not knowing what was aworking, were sore afraid and could give no reason for it: the dogs in the city making a hideous barking round about. This done, the woman in a gast, and pale as death, comes and tells her lady who had stolen the things she missed, and that they were in such a chest in her house, belonging to some of the servants, which being searched, was found accordingly." [1]

This seems a highly satisfactory ending.

If I do not dwell at length upon *The History of Scots Affairs from 1637 to 1641*,[2] by James

[1] *Memorials*, 219. [2] 3 vols. Spalding Club, 1841.

Gordon, parson of Rothiemay (1615-1686), a son of Gordon of Straloch, it is not because its value is small. On the contrary, for the brief period it covers it is perhaps our best authority. To understand what happened after the introduction of the Service Book—to comprehend the full significance of the National Covenant and the methods by which its adoption was brought about—it is essential to turn to Gordon's pages. Written in a manly business-like style, without superfluous ornament, though not without a quiet pungency of comment, his work presents the stirring events of these four years from the point of view of a north countryman, loyal to his king and distrustful of Covenanters who found the Lord's Prayer "threadbare," and objected to the reference in the Service Book to the "Holy Innocents," without qualification or explanation, as savouring of Pelagianism.[1]

Nothing could be better than his account of the Commissioners' visit to Aberdeen in 1638 to dispute with the Aberdeen doctors;[2] nothing more emphatic than his assertion of the decline of learning in the Church after

[1] *History of Scots Affairs*, ii. 59. [2] *Ib.* i. 82 *et seq.*

the shameful deposition of these divines. "From that time fordward learning beganne to be discountenanced, and such as were knowing in antiquity and in the wryttings of the fathers were had in suspitione as men who smelled of poperye, and he was most esteemed of who affected novellisme and singularitye most."[1] It might perhaps be wished that he had furnished a larger supply of those digressions which, as he says, "possibly may recreate the reader." One such episode, at all events, that of the notorious Mrs. Mitchelson, the she-prophetess, who found so much favour in the sight of Warriston and his allies, is remarkably well told.[2]

Very similar in temper and spirit to the Parson of Rothiemay was John Spalding (1609-1700), who seems to have been at one time clerk to the Consistorial Court of the diocese of Aberdeen. His *History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in England and Scotland*[3] extends from 1624 to 1645, and may be said, among its other merits, to convey a singularly vivid impression of the habitual lawlessness of

[1] *History of Scots Affairs*, iii. 244. [2] *Ib.* i. 131.
[3] 2 vols. Bannatyne Club, 1828.

the north of Scotland. A sentence or two descriptive of Aberdeen and its neighbourhood after the visit of the Covenanting army will show that his manner is lively and vigorous, and that he did not despise his native vocabulary.

"The country round about," he says, "was pitifully plundered, the meal girnells broken up, eaten, and consumed; no foul, cock, or hen left unkilled. The haill house-dogs, messens, and whelps within Aberdeen killed and slain upon the gate, so that neither hound nor messen nor other dog was left alive that they could see. The reason was, when the first army came here, ilk captain, commander, servand, and souldier had ane blew ribbon about his craig; in despyte and derision whereof, when they removed from Aberdein, some women of Aberdein (as was alleadged) knitt blew ribbins about their messens' craigs; whereat thir souldiers took offence, and killed all their dogs for this very cause."[1] It does not appear whether the leading case of Agag was cited by the ministers in justification of this acting of divine vengeance through human instruments.

[1] *History of the Troubles*, i. 114.

It is unnecessary to do much more than merely mention, in the category of historians, John Brown (1610-1679), minister at Wamphray, and Robert M'Ward (1633-1687), minister at Glasgow. Brown and M'Ward belonged to the gallant little band of ministers who, from the Patmos of Holland, denounced the Indulgences, deplored the lamentable lukewarmness of their countrymen in the good cause, and disinterestedly propelled the more zealous among them along the road which led to the Grassmarket and the gallows. Brown's *History of the Indulgence* (1678) is tersely described by Law as a "romance" rather than a history, and M'Ward's tracts such as *The Banders Disbanded*, *The Poor Man's Cup of Cold-Water*, and the *Earnest Contendings* (not published until 1723) owe any historical value they possess to his incontrovertible and unequivocal testimony to the all but complete success of the policy of Indulgence from the point of view of the government. Had any other man than James Sharp been at the head of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland its triumph would have been assured.

It were equally superfluous to devote much

time to Alexander Sheilds (1660-1700), whose *Hind let Loose* (1687), a pamphlet of 742 pages, is written in long and involved sentences. He scolds loudly in forcible-feeble epithets. You can scarce open the book without coming across "detestable neutrality," "loathsome lukewarmness," "fearful strokes," "deadly snares," "hell-born oaths," "the shameful security and ass-like stupidity of this generation." The sting of the work lies in its tail. The last two chapters are on "Extraordinary execution of judgment by private men," an example of which is the murder of Archbishop Sharp, and "Refusing to pay wicked taxations vindicated." He did his best to get the Covenant revived at the Revolution settlement; fortunately without success.

I pass now from the more formal historians to those who write history in diaries and journals or letters contemporary with the facts they record. There is a tolerable number of such chroniclers possessing the indispensable qualifications of an enquiring mind and an engaging simplicity of character; for a meagre record of public events from day to

day is nothing unless it is illuminated by flashes of self revelation. Those to whom minute introspection appeals will find much to enjoy in the Memoirs of Mr. James Fraser of Brea (b. 1639),[1] minister of Culross, which others will consider unreadable, or in the Diary of Alexander Jaffray (1614-1673),[2] who turned quaker, as well as much I should hope to shudder at in the Diary of Archibald Johnston of Warriston,[3] perhaps the blackest soul that ever inhabited the body of a member of the Faculty of Advocates. We shall confine our attention to those writings in which there is a strong tincture of the affairs of this world as well as of religious experience and emotion.

First and foremost I am bound to name in this place Robert Baillie (1599-1662), minister of Kilwinning, and Principal of the University of Glasgow, the importance of whose *Letters and Journals*[4] it is scarcely possible to over-estimate. He was a Covenanter, and lived just long enough to witness the disappointment of the hopes which the Presbyterians had built

[1] In *Select Biographies*, Wodrow Society, ii. 89.

[2] Ed. Barclay, 1833. [3] Ed. Paul, S.H.S. 1911.

[4] Ed. Laing, 3 vols. 1841-2.

upon the Restoration. "We did firmly expect," he ruefully confesses, "a comfortable subsistence to ourselves and all our Presbyterian brethren in all the dominions; and believe that the King's intention was no other; but by divine permission other counsels thereafter prevailed, and now carry all."[1] "It's a scorn to tell us," he bursts out in a letter to Lauderdale, "of moderat Episcopacy and moderat Papacy! The world knows that Bishops and Popes could never keep caveats."[2] Again, "Is our covenant with England," he asks, "turned to Harie Martin's Almanack? Is the solemne oath of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, subscryved so oft by their hands, to eradicat Bishops, turned to wind? . . . Can our gracious Prince ever forget his solemne oath and subscription?"[3]

We realise, when we hear such utterances, the monstrous burden which the Covenant had bound upon the backs of honest, kindly, and well-disposed persons like Baillie. For there can be little doubt that he was a Covenanter with a difference; I think we may say, a Covenanter against the grain, and even against

[1] *Ib.* iii. 484. [2] *Ib.* 406. [3] *Ib.*

his better judgment. He had cherished doubts as to the propriety of holding the Assembly of 1638; he was a strong Resolutioner, instinctively opposed to the one great political idea of the Protesters, to wit, Proscription, and complaining of their "tyrannic Turkish yoke";[1] his great friend, Mr. Wm. Spang, minister at Campvere, to whom most of his letters are addressed, had been a minion of Bishop Spottiswoode, if Gordon of Rothiemay may be trusted;[2] and, finally, he refers to Mr. James Guthrie's "restless and proud insolence,"[3] which a really whole-hearted Covenanter would have been unwilling to do. You will not misunderstand me so far as to suppose that Baillie was an advocate of toleration; on the contrary, he hated it.

So full of matter are his papers that it is difficult to select for comment the most significant passages. Probably his report of Strafford's trial[4] written to the Presbytery of Irvine, and his account of the meetings of the Assembly of Divines,[5] are the most note-

[1] *Letters and Journals*, iii. 335. [2] *History of Scots Affairs*, i. 168.
[3] *Letters and Journals*, iii. 446. [4] *Ib.* i. 314 *et seq.*
[5] *Ib.* ii. 107 *et seq.*

worthy. He mentions the increase of divisions in the time of this anarchy: "the Independent party growes; but the Anabaptists more; and the Antinomians most."[1] It was Baillie's advice "to eschew a public rupture with the Independents till we were more able for them."[2] The exact meaning of this obscure phrase is ascertained by a comparison with one or two parallel expressions. "We trust to carry at last," he says, "the divine and scriptural institution of ruling elders. This is a point of high consequence, and upon no other we expect so great difficulty, except alone on Independency; wherewith we purpose not to midle in haste, till it please God to advance our army, which we expect will much assist our arguments."[3] "We did not much care for delays," he says in another place, "till the breath of our army might blow upon us some more favour and strength."[4]

Mr. Robert was plainly of those who "in chariots put confidence and horses trust upon." When he went up to Westminster he looked upon Episcopacy as the "common enemy." I think before the Assembly of Divines had

[1] ii. 117. [2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.* 111. [4] *Ib.* 122.

performed its task he must have realised that there was another foe to Presbytery even more formidable than Prelacy. He does not like to throw his Independent allies overboard, but he owns that the Almighty "permits these gracious men to be many ways unhappie instruments."[1] He is struck and shocked by the incorrigibly Erastian attitude of the House of Commons, especially of the lawyers, who, following their leader Selden, believe "no church government to be of divine right, but all to be a human constitution, depending on the will of the magistrates."[2] "The Pope and the King were never more anxious for the headship of the Church than the pluralitie of this Parliament."[3]

Such are a few of the observations which occurred to this worthy divine during his long stay in England, where he found the inns all like palaces, and their charges high in proportion. I do not attempt to sum up a character the attractive qualities of which predominate strongly over the unattractive; for that task has been already performed once for all by Mr. Carlyle; and it is ill gleaning

[1] *Letters and Journals*, ii. 218. [2] *Ib.* 307. [3] *Ib.* 361.

where his sickle has been over the field. I would merely ask, with all possible deference, what authority the sage had for that peculiarity in Baillie's personal appearance, upon which he lays such constant and such characteristic stress?

John Nicoll (1590-1667), W.S., belonged to a very different type from the Covenanters. No zealot he, but rather prepared to swim with the tide. He was "no great disliker of Prelacy," according to Wodrow, and the moment that Cromwell is well out of the way, he refers to him as "that tyrannous usurper." What remains of his *Diary of Public Transactions*[1] covers the period from 1650 to 1667, and it is much to be regretted that an earlier volume going back to 1639 has disappeared. For Nicoll has the great merit of drawing no distinction between things great and small. Nothing is too trivial for him. With equal fidelity and gusto he narrates the cruel punishment of Johnne Lawson who had caused serve a stranger to a tenement of land belonging to ane defunct person;[2] describes the bringing of Montrose in a kairt from

[1] Ed. Laing, Bannatyne Club, 1836. [2] *Diary*, 2.

the Water Yet of the Cannogait to the new Tolbuith in Edinburgh;[1] testifies to the good discipline of Cromwell's army, and to the prohibition against throwing filth or water from the windows of the houses, an absolutely revolutionary bye-law from the Edinburgh citizen's point of view;[2] notes an abundance of quhyte butterflies in England in the dry summer of 1652;[3] and records that green peas were "oppenly sauld in Edinburgh full and ryp" as early as the 13th of June in 1654.[4] Nothing comes amiss to his alert mind. He glances at "the damnable persons called Quakers";[5] mentions how live hares were seen in the High Street and the Parliament Close[6] (trying, I presume, to escape from the courts of law and Cromwell's "kinless loons"), and remarks how gentlewomen and burgesses' wives "had more gold and silver about thair gown and wylicoat tayles nor thair husbandis had in thair purses and cofferis."[7] To him we must repair if we would know of the dancing horse, which "did affoord much sportis and contentment to the pepill; but not

[1] *Diary*, 12. [2] *Ib.* 70. [3] *Ib.* 101. [4] *Ib.* 131.
[5] *Ib.* 153. [6] *Ib.* 139. [7] *Ib.* 168.

without gayne, for none wes admitted to see the dancing without tippence the pece, and sum moir";[1] or of that "high great beast" the Drummodrary, "quhilk being keipit clos in the Cannogait, nane had a sight of it without thriepence the persone, quhilk producit much gayne to the keipir in respect of the great number of people that resorted to it for the sight thairof."[2]

All was not drab or dull in the Edinburgh of the Usurpation. And after the Restoration, besides the dancing horse and the drummodrary, there might be found at the Cross the vending of recipes and cures for health, together with dancing on the tight rope or tow, the performer actually lighting "directlie upon the tow as punctuallie as gif he haid beene dancing upone the playne stones."[3] For the benefit of the economic sociologist (or sociological economist) he sets down that numerous "penny brydelis" of servants took place in 1665 owing to the cheapness of provisions, and that on the first day of the year the pepill observit the old antient and beggarlie custome in seiking, craiving, and

[1] *Ib.* 223. [2] *Ib.* 227. [3] *Ib.* 376.

begging hansell ;[1] the ecclesiastical historian will note how the East Kirk of Edinburgh was placed at General Lambert's disposal, how sermons were preached in it not only by ministers but by captains and lieutenants and trouperis of his airmy who carried their swords and pistols with them up into the pulpit, laying them aside while preaching, and how it was thocht that these men were weel giftit but not orderly callit ;[2] the curious in collecting remarkable providences will take notice of a violent storm which did much damage near Edinburgh as a signal manifestation of the wrath of Heaven at a tax of 8d. Scots upon the pint of ale ;[3] while the serious will listen with awe to the tale of the twa boys of reasonable aige upon the Sacrament Sunday in November 1661, "quha in the very tyme of that holy action went doun to the North Loch to play and pass thair time upon the yce, quhilk not being fuillie frozin, did breck, and thai both fell down and were drowned miserablie in filth and dirt. Let this," says the diarist, "be ane document to all prophaneris of the Saboth."[4] Such is the varied

[1] *Diary*, 442, 191. [2] *Ib.* 68. [3] *Ib.* 247, 249. [4] *Ib.* 351.

and entertaining miscellany provided for the reader by this Edinburgh burgess: a sample, we may fairly surmise, of many honest men in the capital.

Not dissimilar in character is the *Diary*[1] of Mr. John Lamont of Newton, from 1649-1671, which is to a great extent a chronicle of the small beer of the kingdom of Fife, though public events also enjoy a share of his attention. Thus he tells us how in 1652 the town of Bruntelland "began to be cassaed upon the town's charges";[2] of a great lady who caused a door to be strucken through the wall of her chamber, for to go to the wine cellar, for she had a great desire after strong drink;[3] and of the notorious Major Weir, who, it is pleasing to learn, had a great profession, and was a keeper of conventicles.[4]

Of finer quality perhaps is the *Diary*[5] of Alexander Brodie of Brodie (1617-1680): a curious blend of the natural and spiritual man from whose composition a "great profession" had failed to eliminate his original decent instincts. He had taken the lead in demolishing

[1] Ed. Kinloch, Maitland Club, 1830. [2] *Diary*, 51.
[3] *Ib.* 40. [4] *Ib.* 218. [5] Ed. Laing, Spalding Club, 1863.

the carved wood-work of Elgin Cathedral, for which it is impossible to forgive him; and he is incessantly groaning about the gross inbreaking of idolatry, blasphemy, superstition, heresy, and all manner of wickedness at the very time which, according to Mr. James Kirkton, was Scotland's "high noon." But there were many worse men in his age than Brodie, and the laird is apt occasionally to get the better of the saint. This day, he notes, on the 5th August, 1653, came Captain Deal (one of Cromwell's captains) and his troops, and quartered on my land in his march. "They destroyed the young oak and birk which I had sown and planted in the little Park. Now this was in my estimation a very great cross, and desiring to search into it what reproof or instruction I had in it, I besought the Lord to discover if this were in his mind"; and he proceeds to enumerate seven reasons which jointly and severally or severally might account for the blow, including his "too much care of his planting and young and tender trees, and his too little care of the desolation of the Lord's church, ordinances, and people."[1]

[1] *Diary*, 73.

Upon another occasion he tells us that "I was angry at Pitgaveny that he suffered his men to break the banks of Lossie which did indanger the land. I refused to eat of his meat or go with him. Let not the Lord impute any sinful humour in this."[1]

But the episode which perhaps sets Brodie in the most agreeable light is his difference of opinion with Mr. Thomas Hogge, a well-known zealot, who, if I mistake not, was minister of Kiltearn in Ross-shire.

"Efter dinner, good Mr. Th. Hogge cam to me anent Alexander Chisholm, but did fall to expostulate with me for the favours which I bear to wicked men. I desird not to speak but to hear. Yet he prest on me, and I said I durst not tak on me to judg the estat of others, and I thought it might consist with a seid of grace to fall in wicked acts frequently, of drunkenness, lying, and the like. He, and one in the estate of grace, may be frequently, more than once or twice, overtaken with these sinful acts.

"He said, That to be frequent in wicked acts of the lyk kind, he could not but judg them in the way to hell.

"I said, Their actions I disalloud, so did they, perchance, themselves, and were burthend with it.

[1] *Ib.* 331.

But for their failing, so I durst not call them or reckon them amongst the wicked: grace may be smothered with much and frequent corruptions and weaknesses. The holi man expressed so much indignation at my expression and opinion, and that he abhord it, and that I stumbld him greatly; my woful heart kindled, and I said I did no less dislyk his severity in censuring the conditions and estate of others, and that he took the keys, and judgd rashly and rigidly; and that I could not embrace the opinion because Mr. Tho. Hogge said it, and if he stumbld at me, he might forbear me.

"He was sorry that my children should hear such doctrin. Lord! pity both my hastiness, rashness, and ignorance, and the want of reverence to that holy man, whom I had in great esteem; and qhuerin I may be in an error, the Lord discover it to me and convince, and let me not go on in it, for Thy name's sake."[1]

Surely that is an admirable account of a quarrel between two of the godly.

Lastly, on this branch of my subject, I must say a word of the *Autobiography of Mr. Robert Blair*[2] (1593-1666), minister of St. Andrews, with the supplement added by Mr. William Row, minister at Ceres, his son-in-law. Mr. Blair was indeed a burning and a shining light

[1] *Diary*, 343. [2] Ed. M'Crie, Wodrow Society, 1848.

among the Covenanters. He was Baillie's master in this University, and Baillie testifies to his "dexterity to insinuate the fear of God in the hearts of young scholars." He was the great-grandfather of Lord President Blair and of Dr. Hugh Blair, of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres fame;[1] and he enjoyed a high reputation as a preacher. He had both "a thundering and a comfortable sermon, wherein he was Boanerges to hypocrites, backsliders, apostates, and covenant breakers, and Barjona to the upright, innocent, righteous, and those that in a time of defection, have clean hands, and have not defiled their garments in a defiling time."[2] Wodrow mentions one of his metaphors, which should appeal to the present age. Speaking of the union between believers and their Master, he said that "the two graces that made it up upon our part were faith and love; and compared these two to the gleu and wooping of a club!"[3]

His *Autobiography* has no exceptional merit, but Mr. Row has transmitted to us an anecdote which is imperishable. Mr. Robert Blair and the equally celebrated Mr. David

[1] See *post*, p. 231. [2] *Autob.* 173. [3] *Analecta*, i. 362.

Dickson had an interview with Oliver Cromwell. He held a long discourse to them, with a fair flourish of words, and sometimes with tears. After they came out from Cromwell, Mr. Dickson, rubbing his elbow, said, "I am very glad to hear this man speak as he does." Mr. Blair replied, "And do you believe him? If you knew him as well as I do, you would not believe one word he says. He is an egregious dissembler and a great liar. Away with him, he is a greeting divil!"[1]

Before passing on to the purely devotional literature of the century—the bulk of which, putting aside sermons and polemical writings, does not appear to be very great—it may be desirable to premise a few words as to the vocabulary of the Covenant. It is as rigidly technical as the terminology of any science, and was no doubt as well understood in that age as it seems strange to ours.

The course of a believer's career ran somewhat as follows. He starts perhaps by being a very commonplace person, neither very good nor very bad, who attends divine ordinances

[1] *Autob.* 310.

punctually, and who is guilty of no gross breaches of the moral law. On a Sabbath morning he happens to hear a sermon—perhaps from Mr. John Welsh or Mr. Robert Blair or Mr. David Dickson—on some such text as "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The preacher opens up this text with wonderful enlargement, and has a great gale in his prayers. Thereupon our friend begins to be severely exercised. This is the beginning of a course of law-work in his soul, which may continue for several years; but at last, possibly after listening to another sermon by an equally eminent divine, he makes a sweet discovery of his interest, and obtains assurance. It is true that he is still subject to damps and darknesses, that the enemy is permitted to buffet him, and that he is exposed to many "challenges"; but he always finds a complete outgate, and, in short, is entitled to be described as a solid, serious, tender, exercised Christian. He may even have the gift of prophecy, which probably takes the agreeable form of predicting the early decease of his enemies, or even his friends; possibly of himself. Satan may

nibble at his heels as he lies on his death-bed; but he will finally depart this life with a rapturous exclamation upon his lips, to the no small edification of an admiring circle of friends.

I have no quarrel to pick with this technical language. It is expressive, when once you are in the secret, and it is accurate. It is doubtless as appropriate to the matter in hand as the jargon of the modern psychologist, who would express the same phenomena with much more pomp and pedantry. But the mistake which those who were in the habit of employing it made, was to suppose that it represented, not merely the normal, but the universal and necessary, progress of events in the soul. "I doubt," says the calm and judicious Scougal, "I doubt it hath occasioned much unnecessary disquiet to some holy persons that they have not found such a regular and orderly transaction in their souls as they have seen described in the books: that they have not passed through all those steps and stages of conversion which some (who perhaps have felt them in themselves) have too peremptorily prescribed unto others. God hath several ways of dealing

with the souls of men, and it sufficeth if the work be accomplished whatever the methods have been."[1]

Of all the "saints of the Covenant" the most attractive is Mr. William Guthrie (1620-1665), minister of Fenwick, and author of the once popular tract entitled *A Short Treatise of the Christian's Great Interest* (1659),[2] better known by the heading of the first part, "The trial of a saving interest in Christ." Not only does he deserve our respect for defeating the attempts of the Quakers to sow tares in his parish, and firmly repressing the attempt of sundry English officers to assert the principle of promiscuous admission to the Lord's table, but he also conciliates our affection by his amiable personality, and by what has been handed down to us as to his walk and conversation. It is related of him by Wodrow, that once he was pressing people to praise God, and came to answer their objections that

[1] *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, p. 65.

[2] Ed. 1724. Patrick Walker records that Mr. William Carstares put the volume into Queen Mary's hands. "When he asked her how she pleased the little swatch of Scots Presbyterian writings? She said she admired it, and should never part with it while she lived." *Six Saints of the Covenant*, i. 270.

they had nothing to praise God for. "Praise God," says he in his homely way, "if you have no more, for this good day and sunshine to the lambs."[1] He never lost the enthusiastic devotion to field sports—hawking, hunting and fishing—which he had acquired on the braes of Angus in his boyhood, and his character is well summed up in the observation that they that made Mr. William Guthrie a minister spoiled a good Malignant.[2]

The *Trial* is purposely written, he assures us, in a most homely and plain style. There are no rhapsodies; his writing is clear, pleasant, almost matter of fact, and the use of the Scots idiom lends it a distinctive flavour. I sincerely hope that the sermon entitled *Letters of Horning* (1681) is erroneously attributed to him. He had great provocation, for he was "outed" from his benefice after the Restoration. But even that cross will scarcely justify his attack on those who sign "that wicked declaration":

"O many a squeak will they give in hell for this one day; many alas! and walladay! will be amongst them, when their lives go out of their body! Many an ill-ravelled hasp will be amongst them throughout

[1] *Analecta*, i. 137. [2] *Ib.* ii. 65.

all the ages of eternity, many a distracted wit will be amongst them when their cursed carcasses are going to the clay; and I warn you all of it and take sun and moon to witness that I am clear of their blood."[1]

Even more famous than the *Trial* are the *Letters*[2] of Mr. Samuel Rutherford (1600-61), minister of Anwoth, first published in 1664, the peculiar qualities of which are sufficiently notorious. The first of these is his incessant use of metaphors drawn from the law of Scotland. Here are some illustrations:

"Our holding is better than blench: we are all freeholders":[3] "often I lie under a non-entry, and would gladly sell all my joys to be confirmed free tenant of the King Jesus, and to have sealed assurances, but I see often blank papers";[4] "Christ seeketh lawburrows of my unbelieving apprehensions";[5] "howbeit the law and wrath have gotten a decreit against me, I can yet lippen that meikle good in Christ as to get a suspension";[6] "I have lost and casten by hands many summons the Lord sent to me; and therefore the Lord hath given me double charges";[7] "Christ got a charter of Scotland from his father; and who will bereave him of his heritage or put our Redeemer out of his mailing

[1] *Letters of Horning*, 20. [2] Ed. Bonar, 2 vols. 1863.
[3] *Letters*, ii. 164. [4] *Ib.* 168. [5] *Ib.* 207.
[6] *Ib.* i. 444. [7] *Ib.* i. 187.

until his tack be run out?";[1] "It is a dry and hungry bairn's part of goods that Esaus are hunting for here";[2] "If my creditor Christ should take from me what he hath lent, I should not long keep the causeway";[3] "In the passing of your bill and your charters, when they went through the Mediator's great seal, and were concluded, faith's advice was not asked. The use ye have of faith now is to take out a copy of your pardon":[4] "I am troubled by an excessive desire to take instruments in God's name that this is Christ and his truth";[5] "My soul's desire is that he would comprise my person, soul and body, love, joy, confidence, fear, sorrow, and desire, and drive the poind, and let me be rouped and sold to Christ, and taken home to my creditor's house and fireside."[6]

These are a few specimens of Rutherford's astonishing jargon: interesting as a literary curiosity, singularly inappropriate, I should have thought, as a vehicle of expression for the highest spiritual emotion.

But if this trick of Rutherford's may be regarded with amused astonishment, his second characteristic is obnoxious to much harsher criticism. It consists, of course, in a continual harping upon, and elaboration of, the imagery

[1] *Letters*, 104. [2] *Ib.* 202. [3] *Ib.* 439.
[4] *Ib.* 438. [5] *Ib.* 341. [6] *Ib.* 368.

of the Canticles, and the analogy between the relations of the Church with its Divine Head and those of a bride with her husband. Such a vein of metaphor as worked by Rutherford is too strong for most people. With a view to these lectures I had made a little anthology or florilegium—a "spicilegium" I had better not call it—of Rutherford's erotic sallies; but on going over my notebook, I frankly confess that I am unable to face up to regaling you with this heavenly Christian's odious ecstasies.[1] It is quite true that Rutherford is by no means a solitary offender in this respect any more than in the employment of legal terminology.[2] I am afraid that a certain amount of the devotional literature of the seventeenth century, and of other centuries too, can boast no exemption from the failing. "Mysticism," the wise it call; and "mysticism" is a polite word which will always go far to cover up nonsense, and things much more mischievous than nonsense. But if not a solitary, he is a

[1] Patrick Walker tells us that the debauchees of his time are drinking their bottles with Rutherford's Letters, "and some young preachers and expectants say, They are only fit for young wives." *Six Saints of the Covenant*, i. 358.

[2] For an extraordinary specimen of this latter, see *post*, p. 147.

particularly gross, offender against decency and good taste.

He had many competitors; but he has no serious rival, unless it be Mr. John Livingstone, with one passage attributed to whom I must trouble you as presenting a felicitous combination of both the literary graces of which I have been speaking:

"Oh! what inexpressible sweetness! to be often reading over the Marriage Contract, and all the articles of the poor-rich believer's juncture, wherein if there be a miss on our part (for there is none on his) there is time as yet to fill it up.... But O! what is all this but the offallings and latter meat beside Himself? Himself the flower, the garland, the quintessence of Glory.... What remaineth then but I am my well beloved's and my well beloved is mine? O to throng in and eat greedily of this banquet of love! It is a wonder that the soul crieth not out, as once precious old Mr. Welsh did upon something the like, Had, Lord, enough, I dow bear no more. O for a sweet fill of this fanatick humour!"[1]

Mr. Livingstone, I suspect, was ploughing with Mr. Samuel's heifer. One other gem from the latter I must pick out before parting

[1] *Select Biographies*, Wodrow Society, i. 265.

company: it is rather vinous than matrimonial:

"Oh that my master would take up house again and lend me the keys of his wine cellar again; and God send me borrowed drink till then!"[1]

A wholesome antidote to this loaded and poisonous stuff is furnished by Henry Scougal (1650-1678), whose untimely death deprived the Kirk of one of her ablest divines and most pious ministers. I cannot help thinking that he had Rutherford's *Letters* in his mind when he wrote his little work on *The Life of God in the Soul of Man, or the Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion* (1677).

"We must see to it," he says, in his quiet way, "that our notions of Heaven be not gross and carnal, that we dream not of a Mahometan Paradise, nor rest on those metaphors and similitudes by which these joys are sometimes represented: for this might perhaps have a quite contrary effect: it might entangle us farther in carnal affections, and we should be ready to indulge ourselves in a very liberal foretaste of those pleasures wherein we had placed our everlasting felicity."[2]

There can be little doubt to whose address these admirable remarks are directed. The

[1] *Letters*, i. 419. [2] *The Life*, etc., ed. 1742, p. 99.

true secret of the Christian religion has not, he suggests, been apprehended by those "who put all religion in the affections, in rapturous heats and ecstatic devotion; and all they aim at is to pray with passion and think of heaven with pleasure, and to be affected with those kind and melting expressions wherewith they court their Saviour till they persuade themselves that they are mightily in love with him."[1] Well might Principal Wishart in the middle of the next century draw attention to the "vein of good sense and clear thought and of serious piety" which runs through the book. Scougal, and Charteris, and Leighton are pleasant and peaceful to turn to after dwelling in the tents of the zealots.

Lastly, a word must be said of the sermons of the century; but a word should suffice, for as regards literary merit they cannot compare for a moment with the pulpit masterpieces of the Church of England or the Church of France.

"The parson's method of handling a text," says George Herbert[2] (who, by the way, agreed

[1] *The Life*, etc., ed. 1742, p. 3.

[2] *A Priest to the Temple*, ed. 1865, p. 246.

with Mr. John Livingstone that a sermon should not exceed an hour in length),

"consists of two parts—first a plain and evident declaration of the meaning of the text; and, secondly, some choice observations drawn out of the whole text as it lies entire and unbroken in the scripture itself." This he thinks "natural, and sweet, and grave. Whereas the other way, of crumbling a text into small parts (as, the person speaking or spoken to, the subject and object, and the like), hath neither in it sweetness nor gravity nor variety: since the words apart are not Scripture, but a dictionary, and may be considered alike in all the Scripture."

It was this latter method, so well described in the passage I have quoted, which was invariably practised by the Presbyterian ministers; and Mr. Robert Baillie comments unfavourably on

"the new guise of preaching which Mr. Hew Binning and Mr. Robert Leighton began, contemning the ordinarie way of exponing and dividing a text, of raising doctrines and uses; but runs out in a discourse on some common head, in a high romancing unscriptural style, tickling the ear for the present and moving the affections in some, but leaving, as he confesses, little or nought to the memory and understanding."[1]

[1] *Letters*, etc. iii. 258.

The importance of the sermon as an intellectual exercise for the hearer was obviously well in Baillie's mind, and the custom of breaking it up into innumerable heads and sub-heads was doubtless designed to assist the memory of the congregation, who were not supposed to forget it the moment they left church. As regards Baillie's criticisms I confess I should never have thought of describing Leighton's style as either "high romancing" or "unscriptural." The Bishop's sermons have, indeed, been eulogised by no less a person than Coleridge, and come as a welcome relief from the common type of "thundering" predicatory eloquence, but they are not great achievements in oratory.

It is difficult to select the greatest names from the well filled ranks of Presbyterian preachers, whose sermons have come down to us in recognisable form. Perhaps we should not go far wrong in choosing out Mr. Robert Bruce, Mr. John Welsh, Mr. Alexander Henderson and Mr. David Dickson.

Bruce's *Sermons*,[1] strictly speaking, fall within the last decade of the sixteenth century, but

[1] Ed. M'Crie, Wodrow Society, 1843.

they are worth mentioning here as specimens of "Middle-Scots" (if the expression is allowable) within a few years of the time when that language was laid aside. So Dr. M'Crie justly points out, and in truth they are not only vigorous, but, so it seems to me, exceptionally racy and pure in idiom.

Mr. John Welsh, who was Knox's son-in-law, enjoyed a great reputation as a preacher and converter of souls, in so much that Mr. David Dickson used to say that the grape gleanings of Ayr in Mr. Welsh's time were far above the vintage of Irvine in his own. He was a great diner out, which I suppose is the colloquial rendering of the statement that "he used frequently to dine abroad with such of his friends as he thought were persons with whom he might maintain the communion of Saints";[1] but he spared not to warn his flock, as the following passage will show:

"It will be over sore for thee to be led within the gates of Hell and never to get out again: it will be over sore to have that currier and bloody dog to stab you through the heart with the flames of that endless fire that shall burn up soul and conscience and carcase perpetually."

[1] *Select Biographies*, Wodrow Society, i. 13.

I need not dwell on Henderson and Dickson, save to remark that Mr. David appears to have possessed the gift of common sense in an unusual degree.[1] Nor shall I say anything of the rank and file. But this, I think, deserves to be noted: that in the course of the century you can trace in the sermons better than anywhere else the gradual process by which a distinct literary dialect degenerates into the merely vernacular. The later men, like Mr. William Guthrie, for example, have plenty of Scots expressions. But in writing they have to use them on purpose, though the expressions came naturally to them in speech; and they use them deliberately, I fancy, in order to be intelligible and attractive to their audiences. The result is that their phraseology produces an effect not seldom undignified and vulgar; while in the more violent and illiterate preachers these qualities reach a decidedly repulsive pitch.[2]

Some of the choicest specimens of the worst class of Presbyterian oratory have been

[1] See, for example, *infra*, p. 160.

[2] Kirkton remarks of Gilbert Burnet that "though he speaks the newest English diction, he spoke never the language of ane exercised conscience." *Secret History*, 294.

embalmed for ever in that entertaining tract, *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*,[1] published after the Revolution, and attributed by Kirkton to Gilbert Crockat and John Monroe. It stirred up fierce indignation in Presbyterian bosoms, an indignation which is the best measure of the substantial justice of its criticism. But to discuss whether its comments are well or ill-founded would be mere waste of time. All of us who have been born and brought up in Scotland—and have heard ministers lecturing and preaching and "putting up" prayers —*know* that it is true; for the Kirk, I am afraid, has been apt to be at least as tenacious of its worst traditions as of its best.

[1] 2nd ed. 1694.

II.

DRUMMOND: LITHGOW: URQUHART.

II.

It is not without a feeling of relief that we escape from the severe and depressing atmosphere of controversy in which we moved for the most part during the last lecture. But if we seek for writers whose chief care was for letters, few indeed are those who reward our search. One such we undoubtedly possess in William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649), whose *Cypress Grove* (1623) is a fine specimen of careful and deliberate writing. Reflections upon death are not apt to be original, and to make them tolerable they must be clothed in noble and sonorous speech. Drummond rose to the occasion, and his performance is not unworthy of the century which produced the periods of Sir Thomas Browne. So far as I have discovered, there is nothing of the Scots idiom in his diction, nor is there anything characteristically Scottish

in his vocabulary. He appears indeed to have yielded without a struggle to the influences which moulded the later Tudor and the Jacobean prose. The famous passage in which he describes death as "the violent estranger of acquaintance, the eternal divorcer of marriage, the ravisher of the children from the parents, the stealer of parents from their children, the interrer of fame, the sole cause of forgetfulness," and so on—this passage has been so often quoted that it is superfluous for me to do more than bring it back to your recollection.

Another and very different figure which moves in a world remote from ecclesiastical controversy, is that of William Lithgow, the traveller, who was born at Lanark in 1582, and may conceivably have survived the Restoration. It is true that he was a cordial hater of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church, which is scarcely surprising when we consider the abominable usage to which he was subjected by the Inquisition in Spain. He makes no secret of his views on this head, and enumerates with gusto the vices and foibles of many of the Bishops of Rome. As thus: What a

thief was Pope Boniface the seventh! What an atheistical Pope was Leo the tenth! What a heretical Pope was Honorius the first! What a perjured Pope was Gregory the twelfth! What an inhuman and homicidious Pope was Stephanus the seventh! What a beastly Pope was Sergius the third! What a poysonable Pope was Damasus! and so forth. But his real sphere of interest lay in the different races of mankind. His was the genuine gift of curiosity which enabled him with vigour and spirit to give an exact relation of the laws, religion, politics, and government of all princes, potentates, and peoples of the distant lands in which he had wandered. He had travelled in three journeys, according to his own account, over thirty-six thousand miles, and the feeling which his *impressions de voyage* produce is that he would gladly do it again if it had to be done.

The total discourse of the Rare Adventures and painful peregrinations of long nineteen years (1632) is, in truth, a most entertaining volume. If the subject is, as he says, "rare and plentiful," he does himself less than justice in declaring that he has handled it in a

"homely and familiar style." There are passages which show clearly enough that he has not ignored Elizabethan models. Thus, while wandering in the deserts of Arcadia, "the remembrance of these sweet seasoned songs of Arcadian shepherds, which pregnant poets have so well penned, did recreate my fatigated corps with many sugared suppositions."[1] Again, in his civil address to the courteous reader he

"comes to talk with the scelerate companion. If thou beest a villain, a ruffian, a momus, a knave, a carper, a critic, a bubo, a buffon, a stupid asse, and a gnawing worm with envious lips ; I bequeath thee to a carnificial reward where a flaxing rope will soon dispatch thy snarling slander, and free my toilsome travels and now painful labours from the deadly poison of thy sharp-edged calumnies ; and so go hang thyself, for I neither will respect thy love nor regard thy malice."[2]

This is not precisely the language of Clydesdale, a district which with praiseworthy partiality and without hesitation he pronounces to be the "Paradise of Scotland."[3]

But if in the course of his wanderings he had lost all traces of his native dialect, his

[1] *The Rare Adventures*, etc. Glasgow, 1906, 63.
[2] *Ib.* xxii. [3] *Ib.* 430.

patriotic ardour was in no wise quenched. He takes fire at once when aspersions are cast upon his country. More particularly does he resent "the ignorant malice of an imperious and abortive geographer [whose name he does not mention] brought up in the schools neere Thames and Westward Ho at Oxford."[1] In reply to this anonymous opponent he generally asseverates

"that for courteous penetrating lenity; industrious tractability; prompt and exquisite ingeniosity; nobly taught vivacious and virtuous gentility; humane and illustrious generosity; inviolate and uncommixed national pedigree; learned academical and ecclesiastick clergy; for sincere religion and devout piety; affable and benevolent hospitality and zealous orders in spirituality; so docible a people and supreme a regality; and for true valour, courage, and magnanimity, there is no kingdom or nation within the compass of the whole universe can excel or compare with" the Scottish nation.[2]

This is tolerably well, and I commend the passage to the attention of our professional patriots. The testimonial should satisfy even them; and I believe they may find several of the formulae very useful.

[1] *Ib.* 96. [2] *Ibid.*

Drummond is good, and Lithgow is good; but neither of them, I venture to think, is so good as the writer to whom I am now about to refer. He is in truth a very phoenix, a *rara avis*, a sort of plant that flowers once in a thousand years, the mirror and *A per se* of ingenuity, of pedantry, of artificiality, yet withal, as I trust we shall see, the greatest prose-writer of Scotland in the seventeenth century.

Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty[1] was born in 1611, a date of which we owe the ascertainment to the researches of Mr. Willcock.[2] He came of an old family, of which the heads were hereditary sheriffs of the county, and in point of fact was the 143rd from Adam by line, the 153rd by succession. A son-in-law of Alcibiades, it appears, named Nomostor, about 389 B.C., "after the lamented death of his father-in-law, whom his native country had so ungratefully used, took his farewell of Greece; and after many dangerous voyages both by sea and land,"[3]

[1] *Works*, ed. Maitland Club, 1834.

[2] *Sir Thomas Urquhart*, by the Rev. J. Willcock, 1901.

[3] *Works*, 163.

arrived at last at the harbour of Ochonchar, now called Cromarty. For these particulars we have his own authority in the tract entitled Παντοχρονόχανον, *or a peculiar Promptuary of Time*, wherein ("not one instant being omitted since the beginning of motion") he deduces "the true pedigree and lineal descent of the most ancient and honourable name of the Urquharts in the house of Cromartie since the creation of the world until the present year of God, 1652."

The manuscript of the work was most opportunely rescued from amongst the regardless fingers of the promiscuous soldiery after the battle of Worcester by a surpassing honest and civil officer of Colonel Pride's regiment, and the author (speaking, it is true, under cover of feigned initials) thought himself obliged in duty to the public faithfully to commit it to the press "lest at any time hereafter it should incur the like hazard of imbezelling."[1] We cannot but be grateful to him for doing so. The genealogy contains many details not readily met with elsewhere. Persons of the name of Forbes, for example, will

[1] *Ibid.* 151.

be surprised to learn that they derive from one Φόρβας, a citizen of Athens. They ought strictly speaking to be Macphorbases, but they are merely Forbeses,

"by reason of the aphaeretical and apocopal curtailing of the syllables Mack, Ap, and Son, for the quicker and more expedite delivery in the expression of those that without regard of surnames were pleased to design men by their patronymic titles. By means of which scurvy custom . . . the Forbeses becoming almost forgetful of the stock from whence they descended, would set up a genarchie by themselves."[1]

Whatever may be said of their antiquity, there can be no question that the Urquharts were a stout and vigorous race. One Thomas Urquhart, who flourished about the end of the fifteenth century, had by his wife Helen Abernethy, a daughter of Lord Salton's, no fewer than five-and-twenty sons, all men, and eleven daughters, all married women; and seven out of the twenty-five sons were slain at the battle of Pinkie. Sir Thomas the elder, our author's father, was knighted by King James at Edinburgh in 1617, and married a daughter of Alexander, Lord Elphinstone, but

[1] *Works*, 167.

beyond encumbering his ancestral estate heavily with debt, becoming a strong Episcopalian, and declining to subscribe the National Covenant, he in no way distinguished himself. He died in 1642, transmitting to his son both his attachment to Episcopacy and debt to the amount of £12,000 or £13,000, besides "five brethren, all men, and two sisters, almost marriageable, to provide for." To defray this burden the son had £600 stg. a year less than the father had inherited for nothing "for the maintaining of himself alone in a peaceable age." Throughout the remainder of his life, after succeeding to the property, Sir Thomas the younger, "agnamed Parresiastes," appears never to have been free from the diligence of his creditors—"lucripetary poscinummios,"[1] as he calls them—who took possession even of the valuable library of books which he had acquired with his own money.

Urquhart was educated at the King's College in Aberdeen, a city which, he declared, "for honesty, good fashions, and learning, surpasseth as far all other cities and towns in Scotland as London doth for greatness wealth and magni-

[1] *Ib.* 376.

ficence the smallest hamlet or village in England."[1] The truth of this opinion has been generally admitted by all Aberdonians. He seems to have been attentive to his studies as a young man, and while others were working for the gout and the sciatica by going out shooting in cold winter weather, he remained indoors with his books, and subsequently partook at table with no less relish than the sportsmen of the produce of the day's exertions.

That, after Aberdeen, he went south and travelled on the continent is certain. We can picture him as he proceeds from place to place, *fier comme un Ecossais*, ever ready to display his learning, and eager to take up the challenge of all "inconsiderable blabs" who ventured to miscall his native land. By the thirties he was back at home, and in 1637 he and his brother were indicted before the High Court by order of the Privy Council for laying violent hands on their father and imprisoning him in a room of the family castle. The Lord Advocate ultimately deserted the diet. He took part in the "Trot of Turriff" in 1639,

[1] *Works*, 395.

and was knighted by the king at Whitehall in 1641.

He returned to Cromarty in 1645, after which his differences with his creditors and with the dominant faction in Kirk and State became acute. He was taken prisoner at Worcester, but was handsomely enough treated, being soon liberated on parole. A final visit to Scotland brought him once more face to face with his creditors, and he was glad to flee to England and hand himself over to the Council of State, by whom he was committed to the Tower. He is believed to have escaped from his confinement and to have withdrawn to the continent, where he expired in 1660 in a fit of excessive laughter, occasioned by hearing the news of the Restoration. The estate passed out of the Urquhart family rather more than a hundred years later.

Such is an outline of the life of this extraordinary man, who, in spite of a strongly-marked vein of eccentricity, was not without high ideals and aims. True, he grudges the neighbouring ministers their stipends. Had he not been robbed of his rights of patronage? And had not one of them, because of a

difference of opinion about a pew or desk in the church, railed against him and his family from the pulpit several times in opprobrious terms "more like a scolding tripe-seller's wife than a good minister"[1]? Yet he desired to see a free school and a standing library in every parish in the custody of the minister, "with this proviso that none of the books should be embezzled by him or any of his successors, and he empowered to persuade his parishioners in all he could to be liberal in their dotations towards the school and magnifying of the library; to the end that besides the good would thereby redound to all good spirits, it might prove a great encouragement to the stationer and printer; that being the noblest profession among merchants, and this among artificers."[2]

But for the oppression to which he was exposed he would have published five hundred treatises or inventions never hitherto thought upon by any. "I should have been a Maecenas to the scholar, a pattern to the soldier, a favourer of the merchant, a protector of the tradesman, and upholder of the yeoman,

[1] *Works*, 281. [2] *Ib.* 282.

had not the impetuosity of the usurer overthrown my resolutions and blasted my aims in the bud."[1] To adopt a phraseology which himself would not have disdained, he might have been essentially the μεγαλόψυχος of Aristotle but for the want of the necessary χορηγία. Unfortunately, no court of law can accept the noble intentions of a debtor as a valid ground for staying his creditor's hand. That Cromartie's creditors were sharks seems beyond dispute. They attempted to obtain twice payment of their bonds on the chance that the discharges they had granted had been destroyed with Urquhart's other papers at Worcester. When the production of the discharges made them "look as if their noses had been a bleeding," Leslie of Findrassie the villain of the piece, proceeded to seize his umquhil debtor's property *brevi manu*. Still, it must be allowed that the reasons proponed by Urquhart for indulgence being shown to him fail to carry conviction, at least to a mind to any extent conversant with the law.

"If it be lawful," he argues, "to cut off the arm for the preservation of the body, how much more

[1] *Ib.*

lawful is it to defalk somewhat from the exorbitant sums of merciless creditors, for the preservation of an ancient family, in favour of him that never was the debtor; seeing the commonweal, for his appearance of good service thereto, may be highly concerned in his fortune?"[1]

These are not considerations, I fear, relevant to infer the suspension of a charge.

Urquhart's first publication was a volume of *Epigrams Divine and Human* (1642). The epigrams are no great matter, but the dedication to the Marquis of Hamilton shows that the Scots knight drew little of his inspiration from his own country. Here is the first paragraph:

"My Lord, Being confident that your gracious disposition will hold in better account the ingenuous meaning of who gives than the sufficiency of the present, I here tender to the favour of your Honour's acceptance a bundle of Epigrams; which though they be but flashes of wit, and such as may with advantage receive point from your ordinary conceptions, yet, for that nothing doth better recommend them than vivacity of conceit, I cannot figure to my fancy a fitter Patron to protect the sublimest poems of this nature than your own noble self; of whose valour and prudence even from your

[1] *Works*, 386.

infancy, both this and foreign nations will afford an approbation so authentic that, by the universal consent of all that ever knew your Lordship, the depth of experience since the memory of man was never seen wedded to fewer years; nor the splendour of heroic virtue to the astonishment of whole armies and princes' palaces more evidently apparent, than in the magnanimity of your generous carriage."[1]

Such sonorous periods are not the typical cadences of Caledonia.

His next work was published in 1645 "for the benefit of those that are mathematically affected," and is entitled *The Trissotetras*; "or a most exquisite table for resolving all manner of triangles whether plain or spherical, rectangular or obliquangular, with greater facility than ever hitherto hath been practised: most necessary for all such as would attain to the exact knowledge of fortification, dyalling, navigation, surveying, architecture, the art of shadowing, taking of heights and distances, the use of both the globes, perspective, the skill of making maps, the theory of the planets, the calculating of their motions, and of all other astronomical computations whatsoever." The opinion of a professor of mathematics

[1] *Ib.*

is generally quoted to the effect that the treatise, which is embellished with a number of curious figures, would no doubt prove to be perfectly intelligible to any one who could be induced to apply his mind to it, but that even if it were intelligible it would altogether lack that practical utility which its author claimed for it. From that view, not being "mathematically affected," I am not prepared to dissent.

Far also be it from me to dispute Urquhart's dictum that "the loxogonospherical triangles whether amblygonospherical or oxygonospherical are either monurgetick or disergetick."[1] The adventurous reader must be prepared for many much harder words than these. The author tells us that he has endeavoured perspicuity and shortness, though it would have cost him very little trouble to be more prolix. And he has thoughtfully appended a lexicidion of the most difficult words, "being certainly persuaded that a great many good spirits ply trigonometry that are not versed in the learned tongues."[2] Even in the seventeenth century, it seems, there were

[1] *Works*, 95. [2] *Ib.* 131.

plenty of mathematicians and men of science who were unable to face the superhuman task of acquiring a minimum of Greek and Latin.

I have already incidentally adverted to *The Peculiar Promptuary of Time*, which appeared in 1652, and pass on to the *Logopandecteison, or an Introduction to the Universal Language.* It consists of five books, and deals with the author's grievances, which have so seriously hindered the present promulgation of the universal speech. These embrace the impious dealings of creditors, the intricacy of a distressed successor or apparent heir, the rigour of the Scottish Kirk, and the austerity of the law of Scotland, together with the partiality of those that professed it a while ago. I forbear from troubling you with the sixty and six advantages over all other languages which the new language possesses, though no doubt they would have sufficed "to sharpen your longing after the intrinsical and most researched secrets of the new grammar and lexicon" which Urquhart was about to "evulge." But I commend them warmly to the attention of all who interest themselves in such crazy and dismal projects. The best

part of the *Logopandecteison* is the Epistle Dedicatory to Nobody,[1] where the jest is kept up with no little ingenuity and spirit.

"When after the fatal blow given at Worcester on the third of September 1651 to the regal party I was five times plundered, pillaged, pilfered, robbed and rifled . . . you then out of your mercy amongst the victorious soldiers were pleased to commemorate my condition. When in horses, arms, apparel, and money I had in that place taken from me above £500 worth English; you at that time out of piety, amongst the Presbyterians of our army, did regret my case. When it was told that amidst the fury of the raging soldiery I had above ten thousand crowns' worth of papers embezled without recovery; you from your generosity of all the great men prisoners were sorry at the loss," and so on.[2]

The translation of the first two books of Rabelais was published in 1653: that of the third not for forty years later. The title-page does not bear the translator's name, but does bear his family motto: εὐνοεῖ, εὔλογε, καὶ εὖ πράττε. It is needless to say that it is by this work that Urquhart's name is chiefly remembered. It is equally needless for me to attempt to

[1] Cf. Rochester's poem on *Nothing*. And see Cambridge *History of English Literature*, viii. 213 n.

[2] *Works*, 299.

criticise a performance whose superlative merits have received constant and worthy recognition. With a reference to Mr. Charles Whibley's introduction to the Rabelais in the Tudor Translations and to his brilliant essay on Urquhart,[1] I proceed to what, the Rabelais apart, is unquestionably Urquhart's masterpiece, the discussion of which I praetermitted in otherwise following the chronological order of his writings.

In 1652 there appeared "Ἐκσκυβάλαυρον; or the Discovery of a most exquisite Jewel, more precious than diamonds inchased in gold, the like whereof was never seen in any age; found in the kennel of Worcester streets the day after the fight, and six before the autumnal equinox *anno* 1651; Serving in this place to frontal a vindication of the honour of Scotland from that infamy whereinto the rigid Presbyterian party of that nation out of their covetousness and ambition most dissembledly hath involved it." The aim of the treatise is said to be to entreat the Commonwealth Parliament, with consent of the Council of State, "to grant to Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty his former

[1] *Studies in Frankness*, 1910, 229.

liberty and the enjoyment of his own inheritance with all the immunities and privileges thereto belonging."[1]

The manuscript of the first part, like that of the *Promptuary*, had been among the papers in seven large portmantels rifled by a string or two of "exquisite snaps and clean shavers" who belonged to the victorious army of Cromwell. One quinternion only of the papers was saved from the soldiers, who were using them to light their pipes with. It formed also part of the author's design to vindicate the reputation of his countrymen. There being nothing in the mouths of Englishmen more common than the words of "perfidious Scot, the false brother, the covetous Scot, a knot of knaves, and such like indignities fixed upon the whole nation for the baseness of some, I resolved," says he, "on a sudden, for the undeceiving of honest men, and the imbuing of their minds with a better opinion of Scottish spirits, to insert the martial and literary endowments of some natives of that soil, though much eclipsed by their co-climatory wasps of a Presbyterian crue."[2] This latter

[1] *Works*, 179. [2] *Ib.* 181.

part of the work was written and printed off, so he alleges, in a fortnight, and it is this which really counts.

He denies, to begin with, that the mere fact that he is a Scotsman entitles him to praise or dispraise, because, as he justly points out, "it lay not in his power to appoint localities for his mother's residence at the time of his nativity, or to enact anything before he had a being himself."[1] Nothing is more usual in speech than "to blame all for the fault of the greater part; and to twit a whole country with that vice to which most of its inhabitants are inclined." The Spaniards are proud; the French inconstant; the Italians lecherous; the Cretians liars; the Sicilians false; the Asiaticks effeminate; the Crovats cruel; the Dutch temulencious; the Polonians quarrelsome; the Saxons mutinous; and so forth, through other territories, nurseries of enormities of another kind. The Scots have got their reputation for covetousness partly through the kirko-manetick Philarchaists, the Presbyterian ministers, and partly through the London goldsmiths, or bankers, collybists, or coin-coursers, who will

[1] *Ib.* 210.

not advance money to a distressed laird. After discussing their case, he infers how usual it is for the irregularity of a few "to conclude an universal defection, and that the whole is faulty because a part is not right."[1]

He then proceeds to enumerate some of the Scots who have for their fidelity, valour, and gallantry been exceedingly renowned over the whole of Europe. There are Leslies, and Drummonds, and Lindsays, and Cunninghams, and Ramsays, and Hamiltons, and Inneses, and Ballantines, while a list of the generals and colonels is given at the end of the book. Venice and Spain, France and Germany, are invoked to bear testimony to the gallantry and magnanimity of the Scottish nation: nay, so are the very Scyths and Sarmats, even to the almost subarctick incolaries.[2] Was not the crown of Bokhara offered to Colonel Thomas Garne, who for the height and grossness of his person was in his stature taller and greater in the compass of his body than any within six kingdoms about him? And was not the sole reason why he refused these splendid offers, that he had no stomach to go through the

[1] *Works*, 212. [2] *Ib.* 245.

initiatory rite of the Mahometan faith? Or take the Earl of Bothwell:

"whose unparalleled valour in a very short time begun to be so redoubtable that at last he became a terror to all the most desperate duellists and bravos of Europe, and a queller of the fury of the proudest champions of his age; for all the innumerable combats which he fought against both Turks and Christians, both on horse and foot, closed always with the death or subjection of the adversary, of what degree or condition soever he might be, that was so bold as to cope with and encounter him with that kind of hostility—the Gasconads of France, Rodomontads of Spain, Fanfaronads of Italy, and Bragadochio brags of all other countries could no more astonish his invincible heart than would the cheeping of a mouse a bear robbed of her whelps." [1]

"Then," he goes on, "there was yet another Scotish Colonel that served the King of Spain, whose name is upon my tongue's end, and yet I cannot hit upon it; he was not a soldier bred, yet for many years together bore charge in Flanders under the command of Spinola. In his youthhood he was so strong and stiff a Presbyterian that he was the only man in Scotland made choice of, and relied upon for the establishment and upholding of that government as the arch-prop and main pillar thereof: but as his judgment increased and that he ripened in knowledge, declining from

[1] *Ib.* 216.

that neoteric faith and waning in his love to Presbytery as he waxed in experience of the world, of a strict Puritan that he was at first he became afterwards the most obstinate and rigid Papist that ever was upon the earth. It is strange my memory should so fail me that I cannot remember his title; he was a lord I know, nay more, he was an earl, aye, that he was, and one of the first of them. Ho now! Pescods on it, Crauford Ludi Lindsay puts me in mind of him; it was the old Earl of Argile, this Marquis of Argile's father; that was he, that was the man."[1]

Later on, Urquhart discourses of famous Scots scholars, such as Master Alexander Ross, Dr. Seaton, and Professor Sinclair of the University of Paris, and many more. From the instances cited it is plain, he points out, that all Scots are not Presbyterians, nor yet all Scots Papists. He would not have the reputation of any learned man of the Scottish nation to be buried in oblivion because of his being of this or this, or that, or yon, or of that other religion, no more than if we should cease to give learning and moral virtues their due in the behalf of pregnant and good spirits born and bred in several climates. "Nor shall

[1] *Works*, 218.

we need to think it strange that in the world there are so many several religions if we consider that the divers temperaments of our bodies alter our inclinations, from whose disparity arise repugnant laws, which long obedience makes it seem a sacriledge to violate."[1]

But, of course, the crowning illustration of the virtues of the Scots is furnished by the admirable Crichton, to whom Urquhart devotes more space than to any other worthy, and whose reputation has to a very large extent been built up on the foundation of Urquhart's narrative.

There are three episodes in the career of the "never too much to be admired" Crichton of which Urquhart gives a full and elaborate account, though I suppose not a single reader would wish his tale shorter by a single sentence or even a single word.

The first in order of time is his contest with the doctors and learned men of Paris. Crichton posted up "programs" on the gates of the schools, halls, and colleges of the famous university of that most populous and

[1] *Ib.* 260.

magnificent city, inviting all the most renowned men for literature to meet him on a certain day and at a certain hour six weeks thereafter at the common school of the college of Navarre, to dispute with him concerning any science, liberal art, discipline or faculty, practical or theoretic, not excluding the theological or jurisprudential habits, in any one of twelve specified languages, in either verse or prose, at the discretion of the disputant. After satisfying themselves by enquiries that this challenge was not a hoax,

"all the choicest and most profound philosophers, mathematicians, naturalists, mediciners, alchymists, apothecaries, surgeons, doctors of both civil and canon law, and divines both for controversies and positive doctrine, together with the primest grammarians, rhetoricians, logicians and others, professors of other arts and disciplines at Paris, plied their studies in their private cells for the space of a month exceeding hard, and with huge pains and labor set all their brains awork how to contrive the knurriest arguments and most difficult questions could be devised, thereby to puzzle him in the resolving them, meander him in his answers, put him out of his medium, and drive him to a *non plus*; nor did they forget to premonish the ablest there of foreign nations not to be unprepared to dispute with him

in their own maternal dialects ; and that sometimes metrically, sometimes otherways, *pro libitu*. All this while, the Admirable Scot, for so from thenceforth he was called, minding more his hawking, hunting, tilting, vaulting, riding of well-managed horses, tossing of the pike, handling of the musket, flourishing of colours, dancing, fencing, swimming, jumping, throwing of the bar, playing at the tennis, baloon, or long catch ; and sometimes at the house games of dice, cards, playing at the chess, billiards, and other such like chamber sports, singing, playing on the lute and other musical instruments, masking, balling, revelling ; and, which did most of all divert, or rather distract, him from his speculations and serious employments, being more addicted to, and plying closer the courting of handsome ladies, and a jovial cup in the company of bacchanalian blades, than the forecasting how to avoid, shun, and escape the snares, gins, and nets of the hard, obscure, and hidden arguments riddles and demands, to be made, framed, and woven by the professors, doctors, and others of that thrice-renowned University—there arose upon him an aspersion of too great proneness to such like debordings and youthful emancipations, which occasioned one less acquainted with himself than his reputation to subjoin, some two weeks before the great day appointed, to that program of his which was fixed on the Sorbonne gate, these words : 'If you would meet with this monster of perfection, to make search for him either in the

taverne or bawdy-house is the readiest way to find him.' By reason of which expression, though truly as I think both scandalous and false, the eminent sparks of the University, imagining that those papers of provocation had been set up to no other end but to scoff and delude them, in making them waste their spirits upon quirks and quiddities more than was fitting, did relent a little of their former toil, and slack their studies, becoming almost regardless thereof, till the several peals of bells ringing an hour or two before the time assigned, gave warning that the party was not to flee the barriers, nor decline the hardship of academical assaults ; but on the contrary so confident in his former resolution, that he would not shrink to sustain the shock of all their disceptations. This sudden alarm so awaked them out of their last fortnight's lethargy, that, calling to mind the best way they might the fruits of the foregoing month's labour, they hyed to the fore-named school with all diligence ; where they took their seats according to their several degrees and qualities."

After half an hour or more spent in an interchange of compliments — compliments "tossed to and again, retorted, contreriposted, backreverted, and now and then graced with a clip or clinch for the better relish of the ear," the business of the day began in earnest, and from nine till six Crichton (to cut the narrative

short) "entertained the nimble witted Parisians with all excogitable variety of learning to his own everlasting fame."

Then the Rector "rose up, and saluting the divine Crichton, after he had made an elegant panegyrick or encomiastic speech of half an hour's continuance, . . . descended from his chair and attended by three or four of the most especial professors, presented him with a diamond ring and a purse full of gold, wishing him to accept thereof, if not as a recompense proportionate to his merit, yet, as a badge of love, and testimony of the University's favour towards him. At the tender of which ceremony, there was so great a plaudite in the school, such a humming and clapping of hands, that all the concavities of the colleges thereabout did resound with the echo of the noise thereof."

The very next day, "to refresh his brains, as he said, for the toil of the former day's work," Crichton went to the Louvre in a buff-suit, "more like a favourite of Mars than one of the Muses's minions," where he carried away the ring fifteen times on end, and broke as many lances on the Saracen.[1]

The scene of the next episode is the court of the Duke of Mantua, whither Crichton

[1] *Works*, 224 *et seq.*

repaired immediately afterwards. At that court there had arrived a certain Italian gentleman, "of a mighty, able, strong, nimble and vigorous body," who travelled over Europe, "wherever there was greatest probability of encountering with the eagerest and most atrocious duellists," challenging them to single combat for a large sum of money. At Mantua his challenge was taken up by "three of the most notable cutters of the world," all of whom were killed by the challenger in succession, the first by a thrust in the throat, the second by a thrust in the heart, the third by a thrust in the belly. These were "lamentable spectacles to the Duke and city of Mantua," but Crichton came to the rescue of their honour, offering to fight the victor not merely for five hundred but for fifteen hundred pistoles :

"The challenge with all its conditions is no sooner accepted of, the time and place mutually condescended upon kept accordingly, and 1500 pistoles *hinc inde* deposited, but of the two rapiers of equal weight, length, and goodness each taking one, in presence of the Duke, Duchess, with all the noblemen, ladies, magnificos, and all the choicest of men, women, and

maids of that citie, as soon as the signal for the duel was given, by the shot of a great piece of ordnance of threescore and four pound ball, the combatants with a lion-like animosity, made their approach to one another, and being within distance the valiant Crichtoun, to make his adversary spend his fury the sooner, betook himself to the defensive part; wherein for a long time he shewed such excellent dexterity in warding the other's blows, slighting his falsifyings, in breaking measure, and often by the agility of his body avoiding his thrust, that he seemed but to play while the other was in earnest. The sweetness of Crichtoun's countenance, in the hottest of the assault, like a glance of lightning on the hearts of the spectators, brought all the Italian ladies on a sudden to be enamoured of him; whilst the sternness of the other's aspect, he looking like an enraged bear, would have struck terror into wolves and affrighted an English mastiff. Though they were both in their linens, to wit shirt and drawers, without any other apparel, and in all outward conveniences equally adjusted, the Italian, with redoubling his strokes, foamed at the mouth with a cholerick heart, and fetched a pantling breath; the Scot in sustaining his charge kept himself in a pleasant temper, without passion, and made void his designs; he alters his wards from tierce to quart; he primes and seconds it now high, now low, and casts his body like another Prothee into all the shapes he can, to spie an open on his adversary and lay hold of an advantage, but

all in vain; for the invincible Crichtoun, whom no cunning was able to surprise, contrepostures his respective wards, and with an incredible nimbleness of both hand and foot evades the intent and frustrates the invasion. Now is it that the never before conquered Italian, finding himself a little faint, enters into a consideration that he may be overmatched; whereupon a sad apprehension of danger seizing upon all his spirits, he would gladly have his life bestowed on him as a gift, but that, having never been accustomed to yield, he knows not how to beg it.

"Matchless Crichtoun, seeing it now high time to put a gallant catastrophe to that so long dubious combat, animated with a divinely inspired servencie to fulfil the expectation of the ladies, and crown the Duke's illustrious hopes, changeth his garb, falls to act another part, and from defender turns assailant: never did art so grace nature, nor nature second the precepts of art with so much liveliness and such observancy of time, as when, after he had struck fire out of the steel of his enemy's sword and gained the feeble thereof with the fort of his own, by angles of the strongest position, he did, by geometrical flourishes of straight and oblique lines, so practically execute the speculative part, that, as if there had been Remoras and secret charms in the variety of his motion, the fierceness of his foe was in a trice transqualified into the numbness of a pageant. Then it was that, to vindicate the

reputation of the Duke's family, and expiate the blood of the three vanquished gentleman, he allonged a stoccade *de pied ferme* ; then recoyling he advanced another thrust and lodged it home ; after which, retiring again, his right foot did beat the cadence of the blow that pierced the belly of this Italian, whose heart and throat being hit with the two former strokes, these three franch bouts given in upon the back of the other ; besides that, if lines were imagined drawn from the hand that livered them, to the places which were marked by them, they would represent a perfect isosceles triangle, with a perpendicular from the top angle cutting the basis in the middle ; they likewise give us to understand that by them he was to be made a sacrifice of atonement for the slaughter of the three aforesaid gentlemen, who were wounded in the very same parts of their bodies by other such three venees as these, each whereof being mortal ; and his vital spirits exhaling as his blood gushed out, all he spoke was this, That seeing he could not live, his comfort in dying was that he could not die by the hand of a braver man ; after the uttering of which words, he expiring, with the shrill clareens of trumpets, bouncing thunder of artillery, bethwacked beating of drums, universal clapping of hands, and loud acclamations of joy for so glorious a victory, the air above them was so rarefied by the extremity of the noise and vehement sound, dispelling the thickest and most condensed parts

thereof, that, as Plutarch speaks of the Grecians, when they raised their shouts of allegresse up to the very heavens at the hearing of the gracious proclamations of Paulus Aemilius in favour of their liberty, the very sparrows and other flying fowls were said to fall to the ground for want of air enough to uphold them in their flight." Need it be added that Crichton directed the 1500 pistoles to be "disponed equally to the three widows of the three unfortunate gentleman lately slain"[1]?

The third, and much the most striking, episode, embraces the chain of circumstances which led up to Crichton's untimely death. The scene is still Mantua: it is the afternoon of Shrove Tuesday, on which it is very customary in Italy even for men of great sobriety, modesty, and civil behaviour for the rest of the year, to give themselves over to all manner of riot, drunkenness, and incontinency, going mask'd and mum'd with vizards on their faces, and in the disguise of a Zanni or Pantaloon to ventilate their fopperies and sometimes intolerable enormities. At this season the whole court strove which should exceed other in foolery, neither my Lord Duke, nor the Duchess, nor their son the Prince being

[1] *Works*, 220 *et seq.*

exempted from acting their parts; and on this occasion Crichton, by the Duke's desire, "begun to prank it *à la Venetiana* with such a flourish of mimick and ethopoetick gestures that all the courtiers of both sexes . . . at the sight of his so inimitable a garb, from ravishing actors that they were before, turned then ravished spectators."

"First he did present himself with a crown on his head, a scepter in his hand, being clothed in a purple robe furred with ermyne; after that, with a miter on his head, a crosier in his hand, and accoutred with a pair of lawn sleeves; and thereafter with a helmet on his head, the visiere up, a commanding stick in his hand, and arrayed in a buff suit, with a scarf about his middle. Then, in a rich apparel, after the newest fashion, did he shew himself, like another Sejanus, with a periwig daubed with Cypres powder; in sequel of that he came out with a three-corner'd cap on his head, some parchments in his hand, and writings hanging at his girdle like Chancery bills; and next to that with a furred gown about him, an ingot of gold in his hand, and a bag full of money by his side; after all this he appears again clad in a country-jacket, with a prong in his hand, and a Monmouth like cap on his head; then very shortly after with a palmer's cloak upon him, a bourden in his hand, and

some few cockle shells stuck to his hat, he looked as if he had come in pilgrimage from St. Michael; immediately after that he domineers it in a bare unlined gown, with a pair of whips in the one hand and Corderius in the other; and in suite thereof he honderspondered it with a pair of pannier-like breeches, a mountera cap on his head, and a knife in a wooden sheath dagger-ways by his side; about the latter end he comes forth again with a square in one hand, a rule in the other, and a leather apron before him; then very quickly after with a scrip by his side, a sheep-hook in his hand, and a basket full of flowers to make nosegays for his mistress; now drawing to a closure he rants it first *in cuerpo*, and vapouring it with gingling spurs, and his arms a kenbol, like a Don Diego he strouts it, and by the loftiness of his gate plays the Captain Spavento; then in the very twinkling of an eye, you would have seen him again issue forth with a cloak under his arm, in a livery garment, thereby representing the serving-man; and lastly at one time amongst those other he came out with a long grey beard and bucked ruff, crouching on a staff tipped with the head of a barber's cithern, and his gloves hanging by a button at his girdle."

After representing all these characters, in the fifth and last hour of his action, he did

"so conglomerate, shuffle, mix, and interlace the gestures, inclinations, actions and very tones of

the speech of those fifteen several sorts of men whose carriages he did personate into an inestimable olla podrida of immaterial morsels of divers kinds, suitable to the very Ambrosian relish of the Heliconian nymphs, that in the peripeteia of this dramatical exercitation, by the inchanted transportation of the eyes and ears of its spectabundal auditory, one would have sworn that they all had looked with multiplying glasses, and that . . . they heard in him alone the promiscuous speech of fifteen several actors."

He then got into his ordinary wearing apparel, and made a speech to his audience to epilogate his extemporanean comedy, and by his verbal harmony and melodious utterance brought their disorderly raised spirits into their former capsules. Before they had time to collect themselves, he had made his way by the back stairs to the outer gate where a coach and six was in waiting. He was presently joined there by a "proper young lady, if ever there was any in the world," to whom the equipage belonged, and they set out together for the young lady's palace half a mile away, accompanied by a waiting woman, a page, and a running footman with a torch, besides the coachman and postilion.

I omit sundry passages and pass on to the knocking which comes at the outer gate of the palace in the middle of the night. It is the young Prince, the son of the Duke, with nine gentlemen at his back, and four pages carrying wax tapers before him. They have been spending the last few hours in revelry: "had done nothing else but rantit, roar, and roam from one tavern to another, with hautbois, flutes, and trumpets, drinking healths, breaking glasses, tossing pots, whitling themselves with Septembral juice, tumbling in the kennel, and acting all the deviseable feats of madness." The whole house is in profound silence, but immediately "the clapper is up again, and they rap with a flap, till a threefold clap made the sound to rebound," and the porter awakes. Pomponacio, the page, is sent by his mistress to parley with the nocturnal visitors; and while he does so, they rush the wicket gate and enter the court yard. The Prince explains that he merely desires to kiss the lady's hand and to be led to her chamber for the purpose. The page declines to take them thither, and the Prince and his "vino-madified" retinue are about to force their

passage upstairs when the admirable and ever renowned Crichton "stept from the shrine of Venus to the oracle of Pallas Armata," with his sword in his hand, and clad in "a paludamental vesture," after the antick fashion of the illustrious Romans, so that he escapes recognition. He addresses them so persuasively that they are on the point of departing, when the Prince says: "Do not you see how he dandleth his sword in his hand as if he were about to braveer us, and how he is deck'd and trimmed up in his clothes like another Hector of Troy? But I doubt if he be so martial, he speaks too well to be valiant; he is certainly more mercurial than military, therefore let us make him turn his back, that we may spie if, as another Mercury, he hath wings on his heels."

This foolish chat no sooner was blattered out in the ears of the Prince's gentlemen than all drew their swords and fell on Crichton, who "not being accustomed to turn his back to those that had any project against his breast, most manfully sustained their encounter." He steps into the court with lovely Pomponacio behind him to give the alarm in case of

surprisal in the rear, and his ten adversaries in a front before him:

"who, making up a quadrant of that periphery whereof his body was the centre, were about, from the exterior points of all their right shoulder-blades, alongst the additional line of their arms and tucks, to lodge home to him so many truculent semi-diameters, he, retrograding their intention, and beginning his agency where they would have made him a patient . . . livered out six several thrusts against them; by virtue whereof he made such speedy work upon the respective segments of that debauch'd circumference, through the red-ink marks which his straight-drawn stroaks imprinted, that being alonged from the centre point of his own courage, and with a thunder-bolt-like swiftness of hand radiated upon their bodies, he discussed a whole quadrant of those ten, whereof four and twenty make the circle, and laying six of the most enraged of them on their backs, left in the other four but a sextant of the aforesaid ring to avenge the death of their dismal associates."

The Prince set forward at the sword's point to retrieve the credit of his party, and Crichton was on the very instant of making his Highness very low and laying his honour in the dust, when one of the three surviving courtiers cried aloud, "Hold, hold! kill not the Prince."

At which words the Prince pulled off his vizard, and Crichton, recognising him, made a very low obeisance, and presented to the Prince the hilt of his all-conquering sword with the point towards his own breast, wishing his Highness to excuse his not knowing him in that disguise, and to be pleased to pardon what unluckily had ensued upon the necessity of his defending himself. "The Prince, in the throne of whose judgment the rebellious vapours of the tun had installed Nemesis, and caused the irascible faculty shake off the soveraignty of reason, being without himself and unable to restrain the impetuosity of the will's first motion, runs Crichtoun through the heart with his own sword and kills him."

The sweet and beautiful lady had by this time appeared upon the scene, and there is a characteristic and amazing description of her beauty. I content myself with mentioning her clothes: "a cloth of gold petticoat, in the anterior fente whereof was an asteristick ouch, wherein were inchased fifteen several diamonds, representative of the constellation of the primest stars in the sign of Virgo": she "had enriched a tissue gown and waistcoat of brocado

with the precious treasure of her ivory body, and put the footstalls of those marble pillars which did support her microcosme into a pair of incarnation velvet slippers, embroidered with purple." Rending her garments and tearing her hair, like one of the graces possest with a Fury, she spoke then: "O villains! what have you done? You vipers of men, that have thus basely slain the valiant Crichtoun, the sword of his own sex and the buckler of ours, the glory of this age and restorer of the lost honour of the Court of Mantua: O Crichtoun, Crichtoun!"

The Prince is seized with remorse, and would have committed suicide but for his three courtiers, who seize him and take away his sword, and thus hinder "the desperate project of that autochthony." Crichton is given a very stately funeral, "and on his hearse were stuck more epithets, elegies, threnodies, and epicediums than, if digested into one book, would have outbulk'd all Homer's works." The whole court wore mourning for him full three-quarters of a year together. The Duke was pleased to confer a pension of 500 ducats a year on the young lady. The

Prince bestowed a similar pension upon her, but did not live long. "The sweet lady, like a turtle bewailing the loss of her mate, spent the rest of her time in a continual solitariness." The verity of this story may be certified by above 2000 men yet living, and there had been more of his acquaintance had he not been killed before he was thirty-two. "And here," concludes Urquhart, "I put an end to the Admirable Scot."[1]

There, then, is Sir Thomas at the summit of his achievement, and, without laying claim to any special knowledge of that branch of literature, I should be inclined to doubt if in any of the Italian novelists you will find anything much better. The whole story of Crichton should be read in order to receive the complete impression, but the excerpts which I have ventured to submit to you may afford a fair indication of the jewels which Urquhart keeps in his treasure-house. You must have noted abundance of conceits, much that is fantastic and much of a not always relevant pedantry. But there are also an unusually rich and copious vocabulary, and an unfaltering

[1] *Works*, 228 *et seq.*

command of a highly ornate and ambitious style. He has, moreover, the true gift of the story-teller, and the true feeling for dramatic effect. The poignant contrast between the opening scenes of careless revelry and pleasure and the closing tragedy of his hero's death proclaim the hand of a master ; and the contrast is heightened with consummate art by the intermediate stages of passion and suspense—the meeting of the lovers, and the midnight knocking of the revellers at the outer-gate. Where this north-country laird surprised the secret of his art, who can tell ? The wind bloweth where it listeth ; and the fact remains that he was a true Elizabethan born out of due place and due time.

It is tempting to indulge the not very original fancy that in the Elysian fields, where decreets of apprising and letters of horning are presumably unknown, he has found congenial associates—appreciating and appreciated. Of such, we may assume, are Robert Burton and John Lyly, Sir Thomas Browne and Thomas Fuller ; nor can it be doubted that Shakespeare himself deigns to reap diversion from Sir Thomas's excellent

humours. Not very many of his own countrymen, perhaps, are to be found in his immediate circle. If he has learned to tolerate Presbyterian ministers and they him, if he has discovered that they are not all as black as they have been painted, and they give the rein to innocent mirth a little oftener than was their habit on earth, then I think that Mr. Robert Baillie, possibly even Mr. William Guthrie, and almost certainly Mr. Robert Wodrow, though he belongs to a later day, are sometimes admitted to the enjoyment of his society and conversation. But in this pleasant company I seek in vain for the lineaments of that truly singular Christian, Mr. Samuel Rutherford, as well as for the sinister figure of the arch-fanatic, Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston.

III.

MACKENZIE : FLETCHER : WALKER : WODROW.

III.

I PROPOSE to treat in this lecture of certain authors who seem to overlap the boundary which separates the seventeenth from the eighteenth century on either side: authors on the one hand who, falling within the earlier period in point of time, appear to partake more of the spirit of the later, and authors on the other hand who, though posterior in date, cast back to a time when ecclesiastical differences had not yet for all practical purposes been put an end to by the Revolution Settlement. I do not, of course, mean to say that if you had no information as to his *floruit* you would immediately place Sir George Mackenzie[1] (to take one of the first pair) in the eighteenth century; his style would suffice to contradict any such inference. But his attitude of mind appears to be

[1] See *Life*, by A. Lang, 1909.

indistinguishable *in essentialibus* from that of an "orthodox moderate."

Three of his works are not included in the two volume folio edition of his collected writings which appeared in Edinburgh in 1716 and 1722. These are, *The Discovery of the Fanatick Plot* (1684), which has apparently vanished beyond recall; the *History of the Affairs of Scotland*, which was published by Thomas Thomson for the first time in 1821; and his youthful novel *Aretina* (1660), of which I rather think that only one copy exists in Scotland, while another is to be found in the British Museum. I regret that I have not been able to peruse the book myself, and am therefore compelled to rest satisfied with referring to Mr. Lang's account of it in his Memoir of Mackenzie. It appears to be conceived in the style of grand romance, and to abound in euphuistic discourse.

It has been observed by one of the highest modern authorities on such subjects that Mackenzie's *Jus Regium* "is a most extraordinary display of the weakness of the Divine Right school, and makes the grave faults of

Locke's works seem venial."[1] This judgment seems to me rather harsh. Few will probably be found at the present day to maintain Mackenzie's principles, of which the chief is that "the legislative and architectonick power of making laws does solely reside in the King."[2] It is true, he admits, that there is such a thing as the Parliament. But members of Parliament sit there by a special privilege from the monarch: the nobility and bishops by virtue of the King's creation, the commissioners for shires as the King's immediate vassals, the commissioners for burghs as representatives of royal burghs and no others. In a word, it is clear that the Parliament is "the King's Baron Court," and he wonders "how it could have entered into the heart of any sober man to think that any man's baron court, but much less the King's Baron Court, should have power and jurisdiction over him, and that it should be lawful to them . . . to punish him or lay him aside."[3]

Now the question for us seems to be, not so much whether Sir George is right or wrong,

[1] Maitland, *Collected Papers*, 1911, i. 9. [2] *Works*, ii. 455.
[3] *Ib.* 456.

as, how does his case compare with that of the other side? Speaking historically, I presume that Mackenzie's view is at least as well founded as that of those who maintain the social contract (which received such emphatic sanction in the Bill of Rights). He meets them fairly and squarely on this ground. "In general it cannot be instanced that the people did in any nation universally consent to election [of a King], nor is it possible all the people can meet, and in Poland, which is the only elective monarchy we know, the freeholders only consent, and yet every private man and woman have as great interest according to those pretended laws of nature as they have, and *potior est conditio negantis*."[1] The truth is that the heated political arguments of the seventeenth century are apt to appear to us fantastic. Both parties were in quest of a power possessing not merely actual but moral authority to impose restrictions upon the liberty of action of the individual man. The one side found what it wanted in a monarchy based upon a theory of divine right; the other found what it wanted in the theory of a social

[1] *Works*, ii. 447.

contract. The controversy is not between two opponents of whom one says, You are bound to obey the King, and you cannot get rid of him, for he is the divinely appointed vicegerent of Heaven; and the other says, Government will go on much more smoothly if you have something like a representative government, and do not vest the monarch with absolute power. No true issue could be joined if such was the state of the contentions. But the opponents of divine right were necessarily driven into maintaining that there was a compact entered into by the people—binding, not only as between the people and the king, but, binding for all time upon the members of the community *inter se*. In other words, they were driven back upon the moral authority, or *jus divinum*, of majorities.

There does not appear to me to be one penny to choose between the rival theories so presented. That it is highly expedient and convenient to decide things by counting heads, I should not for one moment deny. What I am totally at a loss to see is why, when I am taxed (for example) in virtue of a decision arrived at by 100 votes to 99, my

own vote being cast with the minority, I am to make believe that I am being taxed by my own consent and of my own free will.[1] That is the extraordinary fiction which underlies the famous maxim about "no taxation without representation." It seems impossible to take a sound distinction between the abstract moral authority of a tyrannical monarch and of a tyrannical majority.

After this digression, we must return to Mackenzie's ethical works: which embrace *Religio Stoici* (1663); *A moral Essay preferring solitude to public employment* (1665); *Moral Gallantry*: a discourse wherein the author endeavours to prove that the Point of Honour (abstracting from all other ties) obliges men to be virtuous (1667); *The Moral History of Frugality* (1691); a posthumous Essay on *Reason*, and a posthumous set of *Essays on Happiness*.

It is plain from all his writings that the "reign of the Saints" had made a strong impression upon Mackenzie in his youth. The experience of that golden age portrayed by Mr. Kirkton[2] in which there

[1] See Lord Kames, *infra*, p. 202. [2] *Supra*, p. 19.

was an organisation starting from the Kirk Session in every parish, and running up through presbyteries and synods to the General Assembly, for prying into the domestic affairs of every household, had not been lost upon him. "Bigotry" and "fanaticism" were the faults he held most in abhorrence. "The mad-cap zealots of this bigot age," he writes, soon after the Restoration,

"intending to mount Heaven, Elias-like, in zeal's fiery chariot, do, like foolish Phaeton, not only fall themselves from their flaming seat, but by their furious over-driving, envelope the world in unquenchable combustions: and when they have set the whole globe on a blaze, this they term a new light. . . . As that body is hardly curable which entertains such ill-suited neighbours as a cold stomach and ane hot liver; so the body of the visible Church may now be concluded to be in a very distempered condition when its charity waxeth cold and its zeal hot beyond what is due to either; and those feverish fits of unnatural zeal wherewith the Church is troubled in its old and cold age, betokens too much that it draws near its last period."[1]

"I am of opinion," he declares, "that such as think that they have a Church within their own

[1] *Works*, i. 39.

breasts should like wise believe their heads are steeples, and so should provide them with bells. I believe that there is a Church militant which, like the ark, must lodge in its bowels all such as are to be saved from the flood of condemnation; but," he significantly adds, "to chalk out its bordering lines is beyond the geography of my religion."[1]

Matters of religion and faith resemble some curious pictures and optic prisms, "which seem to change shapes and colours, according to the several stances from which the aspicient views them."[2] "That traveller were absurd who would rather squabble with those amongst whom he sojourns than observe those rules and solemnities which are required by the laws of the places where he lives."[3] "How God employs his uncontrollable sceptre, after what fashion he governs this lower world, and in what characters he writes his eternal decrees, hath been the arrogant study of some mad-cap pedants who talk as magisterially of his decrees as if they were of his Cabinet Council."[4]

To one of the fruits of fanaticism—casuistry—Mackenzie, like all honest men, bore no

[1] *Works*, i. 40. [2] *Ib.* 42.
[3] *Ib.* 42. [4] *Ib.* 49.

good will. "I remember," he writes, "to have seen a late casuist dispute contentiously amongst his other cases, whether tobacco taken in the morning, did break a commanded fast or not? To which, after a feverish conflict, his wisdom, forsooth, returns this oraculous answer: 'That if tobacco be taken at the nose, it breaks not the fast; but if it be taken at the mouth then it breaks the fast.'"[1] The conclusion of the whole matter is that "speculations in religion are not so necessary and are more dangerous than sincere practice. It is in religion as in heraldry, the simpler the bearing be, it is so much the purer and antienter."[2] Mackenzie was well under thirty when he penned the *Religio Stoici*, from which these excerpts have been taken; but there is no suggestion of immaturity about the performance.

His theme is substantially the same in the *Essay on Reason*. "Bigotry" he defines as "a laying too much stress upon any circumstantial point of religion or worship, and the making all other essential duties subservient thereto."[3] It is "the hypochondriacism of

[1] *Ib.* 54. [2] *Ib.* 73. [3] *Ib.* 188.

reason, the bedlam of religion, the ape of infallibility."[1] It may induce its votaries to believe that they alone are the people of God, and therefore as His friends may be familiar with Him, "and as friends do one to another may speak to Him without distance or premeditation. Thence it is that we hear dreadful nonsense insolently vented in extemporary prayers, such as would induce one to think that they do not believe him to be a God to whom they shew so little respect."[2] Bigots

"fancy that they who differ from them are enemies to God because they differ from God's people, and then the old Testament is consulted for expressions denouncing vengeance against them. All murderers become sacrifices by the example of Phineas and Ehud; all rapines are hallowed by the Israelites borrowing the ear-rings of the Egyptians, and rebellions have a hundred forced texts of Scripture brought to patronize them. But I oftentimes wonder where they found precedents in the old Testament for murdering and robbing men's reputations, and for lying so impudently for what they think the good old cause; which God foreseeing has commanded us not to lie even for his sake."[3]

[1] *Works*, i. 188. [2] *Ib.* 189. [3] *Ibid.*

Bigots further believe "that the Saints have the only right to govern the earth; and that no earthly government can condemn anything they do in prosecution of these their opinions; thence it is that they raise seditions and rebellions without any scruple of conscience; and believing themselves darlings and friends of God, they think themselves above Kings, who are only their servants and executioners."[1]

It can hardly be contended with success that Mackenzie materially exaggerates or distorts the favourite and characteristic tenets of the Covenanters.

Mackenzie points out, with truth, in his *Moral Gallantry*, that "it is one of the most picquant revenges to undervalue our enemies so far as not to think them worthy of our noticing."[2] This, as much as any other principle, inspires his views with regard to religious persecution. The bigots are not to get the benefit of an advertisement which they so dearly love. He confesses himself, in the *Stoic*, apt to believe that if law and lawgivers did not make heretics vain by taking too much notice of their extravagancies, the world should be no more troubled with these

[1] *Ib.* 189. [2] *Ib.* 120.

than they were with the chimaeras of Alchymists and Philosophers. "And it fares with them as with tops, which how long they are scourged keep foot and run pleasantly, but fall how soon they are neglected and left alone." [1]

"Vanity well disguised," he says in the *Reason*, "can flatter men with the glory of martyrdom; and 'tis observable that this firmness faints often where executions are private. However, this should prevail with a wise Magistrate never to make religious opinions criminal." [2] It has often been matter of wondering or sarcastic comment that he who held such sentiments should have become the great prosecutor or persecutor—the right word must be selected according to taste—of the "Remnant." It is not *hujus loci* to discuss in detail the psychological problem, if it is one, here presented. But thus much, I conceive, may be said, that Mackenzie's conduct in this particular seems in no ways attributable to love of office. His good faith is placed beyond suspicion by his refusal to countenance the illegal Indulgence granted by James VII. Perhaps a clue to Mackenzie's line of policy

[1] *Works*, i. 41. [2] *Ib.* 190.

may be found in a rather remarkable sentence in the *Stoic* written twenty years before the "killing time": "I confess," he says, "that when these [the Puritans] not only recede from the canonized creed of the Church but likewise encroach upon the laws of the state, then, as of all others they are the most dangerous, so, of all others, they should be most severely punished."[1] The laity had made a desperate stroke in the Act of Security of 1669 to snatch the control of affairs in Church as well as in State out of the blundering hands of churchmen, both Presbyterian and Episcopalian, who had amply demonstrated their gross incompetency. The value of the experiment was worth testing, and, as I said before, the Indulgence just failed of being a complete success.[2] But the validity of this apology for Mackenzie is a question which cannot be discussed here.

The *Essays on Happiness* are more formal than the works which have an obvious reference to the age in which they were composed. They contain, it must be owned, a good deal of platitude, which only a grave and dignified

[1] *Ib.* 41. [2] *Supra*, p. 28.

style can render tolerable. Mackenzie, like Drummond, is elevated and sonorous. Speaking of Cato, Regulus, and their like, he says: "They balanced the pleasure of fame against the horrors of death, and the immortality of praise against the shortness of life; and, knowing they were by nature to die shortly, they resolved by virtue to die bravely, forcing necessity to bow and comply with their designs, and making themselves immortal even by their mortality."[1] Perhaps the figure of antithesis is here a little too persistent and obtrusive; so let us try another passage:

"Man's very touch seems to be contagious; and nothing can pass his hand with an unspoil'd gloss. And though one should in reason imagine that so many disappointments as men meet with may justly cool that fervour after new pleasures, yet the pursuers do rather conclude that, seeing there is a happiness to be found, and that it is not in any of these objects which they have enjoyed, it must certainly remain in that they now propose. Not unlike the seekers of the philosopher's stone, who, after all their disappointments, do still conclude that they are by so much the nearer to the finding out their beloved secret, by how much time and money they have already spent."[2]

[1] *Works*, i. 21. [2] *Ib.* 2.

This is surely well and nobly said; and the same remark may be made of another passage the truth of which is likely to strike us more forcibly as we grow older:

"In vain are trophies carried before him whom ambition hath deserted with that natural fervour which maintained it: and it is hard to warm our courage when our bed and cordials can scarcely warm our blood.... I remember that I was once long detained by this reflection upon seeing David, that mighty prince, who killed lions and giants, represented in his last age upon a couch, changing his shirt, where the pale colours and empty wrinkles of old age were to be seen sitting upon that hero who was once so beautiful as to enflame the daughter of his King, and now so crazy that he feared more a cold blast than he would formerly an army of Philistines; and I imagined that if any of the ruffling gallants of these times had seen this monarch in this condition, they had doubtless swore that David was never so great a warrior as he was fam'd to be, and that he owed his great name only to the simplicity of the times wherein he lived; else in their age he had not attained to so much praise. This is the great unhappiness of worth, when eclipsed by any accident, that to its other miseries is added the misfortune of being believed by their late acquaintance to have deserved no more than they then do. And so much are we detained by what is present that

he who hears an old judge mistake a case, or sees an old general timorous, does suffer the present frailty to covert and eclipse their former merit."[1]

We may depend upon it that Mackenzie did not acquire this measured and impressive diction at St. Andrews nor yet at Bourges. It irresistibly suggests a faithful study, nay, a conscious and deliberate imitation, of Sir Thomas Browne.

The complete absence of all traces of a distinctively Scotch idiom in Mackenzie rather inclines one to suppose that, by the time when he was composing his works, the southern English had become the acknowledged literary language of the educated gentry in Scotland. Even in Hume of Godscroft's day to write in Scots required an apology. "For the language," says the historian of the House of Douglas,

"For the language, it is my mother tongue, that is, Scottish; and why not, to Scottish men? Why should I contemn it? I never thought the difference so great as that, by seeking to speak English, I would hazard the imputation of disaffection. Every tongue hath its own virtue and grace. Some are more substantial, others more ornate and suc-

[1] *Works*, i. 7.

cinct. They have also their own defects and faultiness. Some are harsh, some are effeminate, some are rude, some affectate and swelling. The Romans spake from their heart, the Grecians with their lips only, and their ordinary speech was compliments"—(I pause to observe that to judge by Aristophanes the vocabulary of the Athenians was enviably rich in terms of opprobrium and abuse)—"especially the Asiatic Greeks did use a loose and blown kind of phrase. And who is there that keeps that golden mean? For my own part I like our own, and he that writes well in it writes well enough for me. Yet I have yielded somewhat to the tyranny of custom and the times, not seeking curiously for words, but taking them as they came to hand. I acknowledge also my fault (if it be a fault) that I ever accounted it a mean study, and of no great commendation, to learn to write or to speak English, and have loved better to bestow my pains and time on foreign languages, esteeming it but a dialect of our own, and that (perhaps) more corrupt."[1]

Mackenzie assures us that in his day there was little difference between the idiom of the English gentry and the Scotch. But that statement can scarcely have been applicable beyond the limits of a high official circle. Upon his own showing it does not apply to

[1] Preface to the *History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*, 1644.

the speech of lawyers. You may remember how he maintains that "the Scottish idiom of the British tongue is more fit for pleading than either the English idiom or the French tongue. The English pronounciation," it seems, "is too grave and slow, the French too soft and effeminate. The Scots pronunciation, on the other hand, is, like ourselves, fiery, abrupt, sprightly and bold."[1] Therefore the English is fit for haranguing, the French for complimenting, and the Scots for pleading. He suggests, moreover, that the law of Scotland is more favourable to pleading than that of England, where a case can be immediately decided upon the authority of a decision or a statute: an instructive fragment of comparative jurisprudence. All this is very interesting, but not always, it must be confessed, very easy to follow.

It is a startling idea to us that the Scots mode of speech is essentially "brisk, smart, and quick." If that was the case, our forensic must have been very different from our ecclesiastical oratory in the seventeenth century with its accompaniment of sighs and groans. But

[1] *Works*, Preface to the *Pleadings*, i. 17.

it is a rare gratification to hear an advocate on the mysteries of his craft; and Sir George's reflections are the more welcome. He throws out hints which certain pleaders of to-day might do well to take. "Many parentheses are to be avoided, for they interrupt the thread of the discourse and make it knotty and mysterious." "Frequent repetitions of the ordinary compellations, such as my Lord Chancellor or my Lord President, are to be likewise shunned." There are two styles: the laconic or short, and the Asiatic or profuse and copious. The latter must still reign at the bar: the former should be used by legislators and judges.[1] I abstain from enquiring how far the statute book and the law reports show that this sound advice has been taken to heart. Mackenzie, we see, agrees with Hume of Godscroft about the "loose and blown kind of phrase"[2] of the Asiatic Greeks. But it is evident that, unlike him, he did not consider it "a mean study" to learn to write English.

Much less ornate, much less elaborate, than

[1] *Ib.* 16.

[2] Cf. Mr. Archibald Simson's allusion to "toom Asiatic oratory," *apud Select Biographies*, Wodrow Soc. i. 119.

the style of the great Lord Advocate is that of the celebrated Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun,[1] nearly twenty years his junior, who wrote and spoke with singular vigour and clearness. Staunch patriot as he was, and ardent maintainer of Scottish independence, his writing is as free from Scotticisms as Mackenzie's; a circumstance which seems to bear out our theory that, for literary purposes, English was the normal and accepted vehicle of expression for the Scottish educated and official class during the last forty years of the seventeenth century. Fletcher's character presents a curious mixture of agreeable and disagreeable qualities. His thoughts as to religion were "large," but he could never tolerate contradiction. So wedded was he to his own opinions that there were few he could endure to reason against him. So says Lockhart of Carnwath, who assures us that Fletcher "was blessed with a soul that hated and despised whatever was mean and unbecoming a gentleman." "A violent republican and extremely passionate," according to the testimony of Burnet, he nevertheless "liked, commended,

[1] *Political Works*, 1737.

and conversed with high-flying Tories more than any other set of men."

This habit seemed to his whole-hearted admirer, the mad Earl of Buchan, Henry and Thomas Erskine's brother, to call for some explanation. In his Essay on Fletcher, published in 1792, he accordingly points out that the Tories were then the country party as opposed to the Court party; and that Whigs and Tories in Fletcher's day were "quite distinct, disliking and avoiding each other, not mingled together as they now are to share among themselves the plunder of their country":[1] a curious observation to make at a time when party feeling in this country was reaching a height that has never probably been equalled since the Civil War.

Fletcher was an ardent lover of "freedom" as he believed it had existed in antiquity, fostered by "the excellent rules and examples of government which the antients have left us."[2] He attributed to freedom of government the greatness of England,

"where men of vast estates live in secure possession of them, and whose merchants live in as great

[1] p. 44. [2] *Political Works*, 4.

splendour as the nobility of other nations . . . which has a commonalty not only surpassing all those of that degree which the world can now boast of, but also those of all former ages, in courage, honesty, good sense, industry, and generosity of temper."[1]

These words remind one of Burke's famous eulogium upon the English people which Mr. Matthew Arnold was so fond of quoting. The great danger to liberty, in Fletcher's opinion, lies in a standing army. Standing mercenary forces are simply engines of tyranny. To the elaboration of this proposition he devotes the tract entitled *A Discourse of Government with regard to Militias* (1698). The power of granting or refusing money, though vested in the subject, is not a sufficient security for liberty where a standing mercenary army is kept up in time of peace; "for he that is armed is always master of the purse of him that is unarmed."[2] The endeavour of Charles I. to make himself absolute was "preposterous," for he "attempted to seize the purse before he was master of the sword."[3] In place of a standing army there should be a good militia. Four camps should be formed, three in England

[1] *Political Works*, 67. [2] *Ib.* 8. [3] *Ib.* 26.

and one in Scotland, to which all young men should go on entering their twenty-second year, to be trained for two years.[1] "Is it not a shame," he indignantly asks, "that any man who possesses an estate, and is at the same time healthful and young, should not fit himself by all means for the defence of that and his country rather than to pay taxes to maintain a mercenary, who, though he may defend him during a war, will be sure to insult and enslave him in time of peace?"[2] Two hundred years have passed since Fletcher wrote; the existence of a standing army has proved to be entirely compatible with the liberty of the subject; but we are still at sixes and sevens about the great problem of national defence.

Fletcher returns to the question of a mercenary force in the first of *Two Discourses concerning the Affairs of Scotland* published also in 1698. He adds little to what he had already advanced on the topic, and the Second Discourse, which deals with what used to be called "the state of the nation," is the more interesting, and is, indeed, the most interesting of all his works. "There are at this day in

[1] *Ib.* 54. [2] *Ib.* 52.

Scotland," he avers, "200,000 people begging from door to door, besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the Church boxes."[1] It is true that the three previous years have been exceptionally lean, have, in point of fact, been years of famine; but even in normal times the number of such vagabonds is 100,000; and "there have always been in Scotland such numbers of poor as by no regulation could even be orderly provided for, and this country has always swarmed with such numbers of idle vagabonds as no laws could ever restrain."[2] The Highlands are the great nursery and refuge of such persons: "nor can there be a thorough reformation in this affair so long as the one half of our country in extent of ground is possessed by a people who are all gentlemen only because they will not work, and who in everything are more contemptible than the vilest slaves, except that they always carry arms, because for the most part they live upon robbery."[3]

The source of our poverty, in Fletcher's opinion, lies "in the letting of our lands at so excessive a rate as makes the tenant poorer

[1] *Political Works*, 144. [2] *Ib.* 123. [3] *Ib.* 150.

even than his servant whose wages he cannot pay; and involves in the same misery day labourers, tradesmen, and the lesser merchants, who live in the country villages and towns."[1] The condition of the lesser freeholders or heritors is little better than that of the tenants: "they have no stocks to improve their lands, and, living not as husbandmen but as gentlemen, they are never able to attain any."[2]

What, then, is the remedy for this state of matters? In the first place, a law should be passed prohibiting interest for money. This will divert all capital seeking employment into agriculture. Next, there should be a law that no man possess more land than so much as he should cultivate by his servants.[3] And, thirdly, he suggests a law "obliging all men that possess lands under the value of £200 stg. clear profits yearly to cultivate them by servants, and pay yearly the half of the clear profits to such persons as, cultivating land worth £200 stg. a year or above, shall buy such rents of them at twenty years' purchase."[4] The project sounds a little complicated, but he assures us that, if it were carried out, "the

[1] *Ib.* 154. [2] *Ib.* 155. [3] *Ib.* 163. [4] *Ib.* 164.

ground by inclosure and other improvements will produce the double of what it now does; and the race of horses and black cattle will be much amended."[1]

I have reserved for the last his most startling proposal. The chief remedy advocated by this lover of liberty is slavery *sub conditione*. The master is not to have the power of life and death. He is to provide his servant and his wife and family with clothes, diet, and lodging. The pill is to be well gilded; for any man is to be punished who gives the servant "the opprobrious name of slave."[2]

This is pretty well for a political philosopher who has announced a few pages before that he regards not names but things.[3] Bad treatment of the servant by his master will be rare, for it is against the master's interest. If it does happen, it will generally be the result of the servant's own perversity. But "all inconveniences cannot be obviated by any government," and a particular magistrate might be instituted to attend to this one.[4] He describes with enthusiasm the advantages

[1] *Political Works*, 167. [2] *Ib.* 134.
[3] *Ib.* 131. [4] *Ib.* 136.

which the ancients derived from such a system: their magnificent public works and their private luxury. Not only could they adorn their public buildings with all the refinements of art, but likewise "beautify their private houses, villas, and gardens, with the greatest curiosity."[1]

This explains the combination of virtue and simplicity of manners with great curiosity and refinement in the arts of magnificence and ornament which we see, or at least which Fletcher saw, in the life of ancient Greece and Rome. "Women were not then intolerably expensive, but wholly employed in the care of domestic affairs."[2] Above all, the ancients "were not under that uneasiness and unspeakable vexation which we suffer by our hired servants, who are never bred to be good for anything, though most of the slaves among the ancients were. And though we bestow the greatest pains or cost to educate one of them from his youth, upon the least cross word he leaves us."[3] A slave had no temptation to cheat his master, "whereas a hired servant while he remains unmarried, will cheat his

[1] *Ib.* 140. [2] *Ib.* 142. [3] *Ibid.*

master of what may be a stock to him when married; and, if after his marriage he continue to serve his master, he will be sure to cheat him much more."[1]

Every one of a certain estate in the nation should be compelled to take a proportionable number of the nomadic population in Scotland, and employ them on the terms indicated either upon his estate or in home manufactures. Hospitals and almshouses ought to be provided for the sick, lame, and decrepit. "These things," he warns us, "must, when once resolved, be executed with great address, diligence, and severity. For that sort of people is so desperately wicked, such enemies of work and labour, and so proud" that they will retreat to the dens and caves of the Highlands.[2] Meanwhile, *pour encourager les autres*, "three or four hundred of the most notorious of these villains which we call jockys, might be presented by the government to the state of Venice to serve in their galleys against the common enemy of Christendom."[3]

Such are Fletcher's schemes for regenerating society. This is not the occasion to discuss

[1] *Political Works*, 143. [2] *Ib.* 149. [3] *Ib.* 148.

them. They seem fanciful and far-fetched at first sight. I am not sure that there is much more in them than a manifestation of the eager desire which perennially springs in the bosom of "social reformers" to get back from contract to status; and they obviously bear a strong family resemblance to many of the quack panaceas for human ills of which the present age is so prolific. But I must not forget to mention that yet another entry in Fletcher's ambitious programme is the removal of the present seat of government. "For, as the happy situation of London has been the principal cause of the glory and riches of England, so the bad situation of Edinburgh has been one great occasion of the poverty and uncleanliness in which the greater part of the people of Scotland live."[1] Can he have been thinking in a species of prophetic trance of the second (or is it the third?) city of the Empire? I know not; neither do I know how the capital can justly be held responsible, except in respect of setting an exceedingly bad example, for the dirt and squalor which prevailed in the rest of the country.

[1] *Ib.* 172.

I need scarcely remind you of Fletcher's unflinching opposition to the Union of 1707. His attitude in regard to that matter illustrates the peculiar combination of political prescience with political blindness which is often to be observed in men of his stamp. He is under no delusion as to what *the* grand question for the world was now to be. The day of dynastic and religious controversies was over. "Trade," he says in a memorable sentence, "is now become the golden ball for which all nations of the world are contending."[1] Yet, having grasped this all-important truth, he professes himself unable to "see what advantage a free trade to the English plantations would bring us except a farther exhausting of our people and the utter ruin of all our merchants."[2] He is of opinion that by an incorporating Union of the two nations, Scotland will become more poor than ever.[3] Scotsmen will then spend in England ten times more than now they do, and even those manufactures which we now have will be certainly destroyed.[4]

[1] *Political Works*, 403. [2] *Ib.* 402.
[3] *Ib.* 396. [4] *Ib.* 398.

It is not always easy to follow his train of reasoning as developed in the *Account of a conversation concerning a right Regulation of Governments*, in which the interlocutors are the Earl of Cromarty, Sir Christopher Musgrave, and the author, and from which I forbear to excerpt the famous saying about the laws and the ballads of a nation.[1] We know how the event has falsified Fletcher's gloomy prognostications. It would perhaps be applying too severe a test to gauge the value of a political theorist's speculations by the measure in which his vaticinations have been fulfilled. But I think that, as a politician and a statesman, he is admirably summed up by the author of a *Character* prefixed to the 1737 edition of his works, who says: "His notions of government are too fine spun; and can hardly be lived up to by men subject to the common frailties of nature; neither will he give allowance for extraordinary emergencies." In short, he was utterly unpractical and impracticable: the sort of man whom it must have been impossible to work with: an academic reformer, out and out.

[1] *Ib.* 372.

I have dealt at such length with the two seventeenth century writers who might have belonged to the eighteenth century, so far, at all events, as the style of the one and the general outlook of the other are concerned, that I can dwell for only a comparatively short space upon a couple of worthies of whom the precise converse would be true.

The station in life occupied by Patrick Walker[1] is not, apparently, ascertained; but there seems reason to suppose that he distinguished himself in his young days by killing a trooper, and we have it on his own authority that "he had never learned the grammar."[2] To him we owe accounts of the lives of Peden, Semple, Welwood, Cameron, Cargill, and Smith, all written, roughly speaking, between 1725 and 1740, and all in great vogue in the West of Scotland during the eighteenth century.

About his own theological and political position no misgiving enters his soul. His is the true *via media*: no other is genuine. There may be right-hand extremes and left-hand defections. The right-hand extremists

[1] *Six Saints of the Covenant*, ed. Fleming, 2 vols. 1902. [2] *Ib.* i. 5.

call him "a vile old apostate,"[1] for he repudiates the Macmillanites and the Gibbites, who are puffed up with conceit of themselves, and in whom he perceives the very reverse of a gospel spirit.[2] Equally does he abhor the rank and file of the ministry of "this backsliding and upsitten church,"[3] the edge of whose zeal is "rusted and blunt as culters."[4] The members of the General Assembly of 1690 were "men who had sinned away zeal and faithfulness by wallowing in the sink and puddle of our national abominations and indulgences and toleration, and many otherwise guilty of sinful and shameful silence and unfaithfulness, the greater part tongue-persecutors, and some by hands."[5] He could not have paid them a higher compliment.

Though he expects to be thought by some "more plain than pleasant," he is shrewd enough, indeed, to recognise that a distinction must be drawn between the reign of Charles II. or James VII. and the reign of George I. "Many things would have been taken in good part off the hands of our fathers

[1] *Ib.* 5. [2] *Ib.* 140. [3] *Ib.* 4.
[4] *Ib.* 139. [5] *Ib.* 256.

that will not pass now."[1] But he is soon back at his groaning. The oaths imposed on the Presbyterian as well as the Episcopalian clergy by the Act of 1712 were scrupled at by many, and were relaxed in 1719. That is to say, in 1719 "there was a softening, soupling, sweeting oil composed and made up by the cunning art of carnal wit and state policy; then all went over with ease, and yet nothing but a new toot on an old horn."[2] He bewails "the present black infatuate bargain of union, toleration, and patronages:"[3] "the foul moniplies of that bundle of intricate, implicate, multifarious, and unnecessary oaths."[4]

"Sinful Edinburgh" is "the seat of abominations that has defiled the whole land."[5] "Unhappy Professor Simson," of this University, is "a hotch potch or bagful of Arian, Arminian, Socinian, Pelagian, old, condemned, damnable errors."[6] The Episcopalians "with their high church liturgy (or rather lethargy), with their service books of reading preachings and prayers and bagpipes of organs and singing boys," provide but "very unsavoury food to an

[1] *Six Saints, etc.* i. 142. [2] *Ib.* 221. [3] *Ib.* 8.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ib.* 12. [6] *Ib.* 149.

enlightened believing soul."[1] In long, breathless sentences, he tells us of the power and blessings of the gospel withholden; a reforming covenanting spirit gone out of request; though the lion judgments of sword, famine, and pestilence are restrained, yet moth judgments are consuming us secretly and insensibly; English abominations are drunk in as sweet wine with pleasure.[2] The gift of prophecy has been taken away. Many will agree with Mr. Wodrow that there was too much prophesying forty or fifty years ago. "Malignant nonsensical reflections of that nature are now needless; for such foresights of events are now quite ceased."[3]

Such reflections may be nonsense, but hardly such nonsense as the prophecies, if we may judge from a specimen emanating from a Mr. Douglas, a godly minister in Galloway: "I see all Scotland a field of blood; and I see all England and Ireland a field of blood; but before that time the Church will get a breathing, but she will fall asleep and will not improve it; but the first wakning she will get, the man will step over the bedside in his

[1] *Ib.* 154. [2] *Ib.* 11. [3] *Ib.* 5.

wife and children's blood; then the church will awaken, and it will be at such a nick of time that one of the nations will not be able to help another."[1] Vague as such gibberish is, it was impossible to pretend that Mr. Douglas's predictions had been fulfilled. Even what we should call the minor morals of the age are out of joint. We may agree with Walker that "it had been good for that unhappy lass, who danced off the head of John the Baptist, that she had been born a criple, and never drawn a limb to her."[2] It is another matter to deplore the "Cameronian March" as "a carnal vain spring which too many professors of religion dance to."[3] "Our Scripture and old Scots names are gone out of request in our speech: instead of 'father' and 'mother,' 'mamma' and 'papa,' training children to what they do not understand."[4]

The short and the long of it is that he who would see the later Covenanters and their traditions at their worst must repair, not to the page of their opponents, but, to that of

[1] *Six Saints, etc.* i. 93. [2] *Ib.* 239.
[3] *Ib.* 239. [4] *Ib.* 162.

Peter Walker. There they stand before us in all their dark and barely sane fanaticism, portrayed by the loving hand of an enthusiastic disciple. Few more unpleasant characters surely are to be found even in religious biography than Mr. Alexander Peden. It is easy to rhapsodize about "our covenanting forefathers" when one's recollection has become a little dim. To come across the reality in Walker is to receive a salutary shock. And if any devotee is reluctant to have his illusion dissipated, let him well perpend the astounding document in which are embodied Mr. Peden's views and thoughts on the Covenant of Redemption. It is in the form of a legal contract.

"Be it known to all men that, in the presence of the Ancient of Days it was finally contracted and unanimously agreed betwixt these honourable and royal persons in the God-head to wit [here the persons are enumerated] that inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ is content and obliges himself to become surety and to fulfil the whole law . . . therefore the noble Lord of Heaven and Earth on the other side binds and obliges himself to Christ to send all the elect into the world, and to deliver them all fairly to Christ. . . . Moreover he allows the said

Jesus Christ to make proclamations by his servants to the world in his name that all that will come and engage under his colours he sall give them noble pay in hand for the present, and a rich inheritance for ever; with certification that all those who will not accept of this offer, for the same cause shall be guilty and eternally condemned from our presence and tormented with these devils whom we cast out from us for their pride and rebellion, for the glory of our justice through Eternity.

> In Witness Whereof he subscribes thir presents, and is content the same be registrate in the Books of Holy Scripture to be kept on record to future generations. Dated at the Throne of Heaven in the ancient records of Eternity."[1]

Observe the testing clause; observe the clause consenting to registration. The document might serve as a basis for the lectures of a Professor of Conveyancing.

After Walker, other writers "on the same lay" (as Wodrow would say) seem languid and tame. John Howie's *Scots Worthies* (1775) is a belated attempt to maintain the old tradition. But I need not remind you how the dreadful old legal phraseology revived again in

[1] *Six Saints, etc.* 114.

something like its pristine vigour with the ascendancy of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland.

Robert Wodrow was born in 1679, and was ordained minister of the Parish of Eastwood, in the immediate vicinity of Glasgow, in 1703. His wife was a daughter of Mr. Patrick Warner of Ardeer, minister at Irvine, and a granddaughter of Mr. William Guthrie of Fenwick. In 1722 he published *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, with which he had been "throng" for eight years. He died in 1734. The greater part of the historical material collected by him is now in the Advocates' Library. It includes 138 MS. volumes in 8vo, 4to, and folio. There are besides a number of letters; and twenty volumes of miscellaneous MSS., notebooks, sermons, etc. In addition to the *Sufferings*, there have been printed three volumes of his *Correspondence*,[1] edited by Dr. M'Crie, covering the period from 1709 to 1731, three volumes of his biographical *Collections*,[2] and four volumes of

[1] Wodrow Soc. 1842-3.

[2] Maitland Club, 1834-35; New Spalding Club, 1890.

his *Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences.*[1]

As an historian Wodrow makes no pretence to impartiality. But I think one may certainly say of him, what I have already said of Calderwood and Spottiswoode, that he is honest. A strong partisan of Presbytery, he is shrewd enough to detect the weak places in the Episcopalian armour, and his character sketches of Charles II.'s Bishops are masterpieces of virulence. He can find something disagreeable to say even of Leighton. Perhaps the strongest testimonial in his favour is the enmity which he aroused in the bosoms of the wild men's champions. Peter Walker charges him with gross mistakes and groundless slanderous reflexions upon the faithful followers of the Lamb, upon whom he has bestowed nicknames, such as "the warmer sort," "warm hot persons," "the violent party," "highfliers," and so on: "transmitting their contendings against defections of all kinds and testimonies which they sealed with their blood under the names of heights, heats, excesses, extremes and flights." Peter is particularly indignant at his attacks

[1] Maitland Club, 1834.

upon our banished worthies, such as M'Ward and Brown. "But this," he explains, "is the foulsome unwholesome air he has lived in, being over-run and over-driven with the back-sliding spirit of the day."[1]

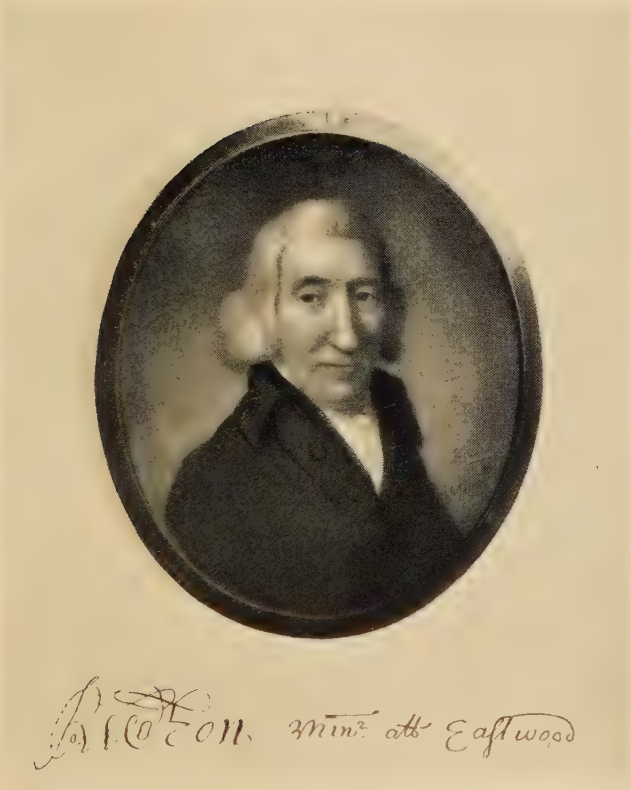
There is plenty of idiomatic Scots in Wodrow's prose, though he is naturally more colloquial in his letters and commonplace book. He has the genuine gift of the story-teller, and can narrate an episode with a directness and vigour that are more effective than studied or ambitious writing. Nothing could be better of its kind than his account of the murder of James Sharp, the grave simplicity of which only enhances the horror of the circumstances attending the crime. The passage is long, but I trust I may be forgiven for inserting it:

"By this time they were come to a little village about two miles from St. Andrews called Magus, near to which they descried the bishop's coach; whereupon one of them upon a fleet horse rode up to the coach to see if the bishop was in it. The bishop noticing them cried out to the coachman to drive. The gentleman hearing this cast his cloak from him and pursued at full speed; the rest did the like and came up as fast as they could; only the

[1] *Six Saints, etc.* i. 295.

person who had the debate with the bishop kept at some distance, and did not at all engage in the action. While pursuing a little this way in Magus-muir, one of the bishop's servants named Wallace turned upon them and cocked his piece; but two of them coming up soon dismounted him, and took his carbine from him. Meanwhile, as the coach drove furiously away, they shot their musquets at it but could not stop it, till the person upon the fleet horse came up to the coach, crying out, 'Judas, be taken.' The primate called the more violently to the coachman, 'Drive, drive, drive.' The coachman kept off the gentleman's horse from him with his whip; but he came up with the postilion and called him to stop; and he driving on, he struck him over the head with a sword, and dismounted him, and straightway cut the traces of the coach and stopped it.

By this time the rest were come up, and found the bishop and his daughter in the coach. The captain ordered him to come out, that no prejudice might befall his daughter, whom they would not willingly hurt. This he refused, whereupon two of them, the rest being taken up in dismounting and securing the servants, poured in their shot on the bishop's body, his daughter shrieking and weeping most bitterly, and were mounting their horses to go off, assuring themselves he was killed. But one of them heard his daughter say within a little, 'O! there is life in yet'; upon which he got again to the coach, and called the captain and the others, who found the



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bishop safe and whole, not in the least touched. Whereupon the captain commanded him to come out, and some discourse passed betwixt them, which I shall set down, as left under the hands of some who were present. While the bishop lingered and cried for mercy, the commander said, 'I take God to witness, whose cause I desire to own in adhering to the persecuted gospel, that it is not out of any hatred of your person, nor from any prejudice you have done or could do to me, that I intend now to take your life, but because you have been and still continue to be, an avowed opposer of the gospel and kingdom of Christ, and a murderer of his saints, whose blood you have shed like water.' Another of them said, 'Repent, Judas, and come out.' All the bishop answered was, 'Gentlemen, save my life, and I will save yours.' The first replied, 'I know it is not in your power either to save us or to kill us; I again declare, it is not any particular feud or quarrel I have at you which moves me to this attempt, but because you are an enemy to Christ and his interest, and have wrung your hands in the blood of his saints, not only after Pentland, but several times since, and particularly for your perjury, and shedding the blood of Mr. James Mitchel, and having a hand in the death of James Learmont, and your perfidious betraying of the Church of Scotland: these crimes,' added he, 'and that blood cry with a loud voice to heaven for vengeance, and we are this day to execute it.' And again he ordered him to come out, and prepare for

death, judgment, and eternity. The bishop still refused and cried for mercy, and offered him money to spare his life. The captain said, 'Thy money perish with thee,' and told him he allowed him time to pray, and commanded him again to come out. The bishop still refused. One of the company, at some distance, cried: 'Seeing there have been so many lives unjustly taken by him, for which there is not the least sign of repentance, we will not be innocent if any more be taken that way.' Then one of them fired a pistol at him in the coach, which it seems did not touch him, and another wounded him with a sword; at which the bishop cried out, 'Fy, fy, I am gone.' Yet the wound was not mortal. And being again called to come out of the coach, he said, 'I am gone already, what needs more?' Then they stepped over near him to pull him out, upon which he cried: 'I know ye will save my life, I will come out'; and accordingly came out. And being again pressed to pray, he fell upon his knees before the captain and said: 'For God's sake, save my life, save my life'; offering him money, and promising to lay down his episcopal function. The commander told him, he had been without mercy, and needed expect no mercy, and he could not spare his life, and again pressed him to prepare for death and pray. One of these present, Andrew Guillan, told my informer that they were stunned to see his carriage, and that by no means would he be prevailed with to pray; and another observes that they were mightily

surprised at his obdurateness, and that there was not the least sign of concern about him as yet. This Andrew was present, and did not touch him, but endeavoured to secure his daughter from hurt and danger, when she would interpose between the actors and him. Instead of offering to pray, he seeing Rathillet at some little distance, crept towards him on his hands and feet, and cried, 'Sir, I know you are a gentleman, you will protect me.' Mr. Hackston answered, 'Sir, I shall never lay a hand on you'; and rode a little off, for all this time he did not alight.

The bishop finding this art to fail him, turned to them and begged they might save the life of an old man, and promised he would obtain them a remission, it being capital to attempt the life of a Privy Councillor. The captain warned him that they would not spare him longer; if he did not address God presently they knew what to do. The bishop's courage still continued and he proposed some new desire; upon which they discharged another shower of shot upon him, whereupon he fell back and lay as dead. But one of them giving him a prick with his sword, he raised himself; then they began to imagine shooting would not do, and the commander ordered them all to draw their swords. Andrew Guillan's expression to my informer is that, upon the sight of cold iron, immediately his courage failed; and though before he still insisted in his petitions, and seemed not to regard their warnings much, yet now he made hideous

and terrible shrieks, as ever were heard. The commander, seeing no warnings would prevail with him to go about anything like preparation for death, with a shabble[1] struck him on the face, and one of his chops fell down: he essayed to speak somewhat, but was not understood. They redoubled their strokes, and wounded him in several places, and killed him outright.

After the bishop was killed, the captain received any arms which the servants had, who were five, two riders, a footman, the coachman and postillion. He ordered them to deliver all their papers; they said they had none; then he went to the coach and got a little trunk, and finding nothing in it but hoods and clothes belonging to the bishop's daughter, it was set in again. He found another little box with papers, which he seized. In a trunk upon the coach he found a few more papers, and a large bible full of fine cuts, and pictures of Christ and the New Testament saints, and some passages of the history of the Bible in Taliduce and a case of very fine French pistols, all which they took. The rest of the trunk contained clothes and furniture, which they did not touch, taking nothing but papers and arms. In the bishop's pockets they found neither silver nor gold, but only some letters and papers, and a whinger with silver roves, and knives conform. Several of the forementioned accounts bear that they found on the bishop a box with some pistol-ball, threads of

[1] "A crooked sword or hanger."—Jamieson.

worsted, and other odd things in it, which they knew not what to make of. This is all I have met with as to the material circumstances of this fact, and I have given it as I found it in papers which are writ by persons present, who only indeed could give accounts of this matter; and they agree, as far as I can learn, with the accounts which went up and down after the murder was committed. All this took up about three quarters of an hour about mid-day, betwixt twelve and one of the clock, Saturday May 3rd, this year [1679]. As they went off, they met a man very well mounted, and asking him what he was, he answered, one of my Lord St. Andrews' servants, whom, it seems, the bishop had sent off to pay his respects to some persons about; they dismounted him, took his arms from him, and drove away his horse to shift for himself, as they had formerly done to the other two riding servants, and thus rode away in a body to a place three or four miles distant from Magus Muir, where this action was done.

. . . . . .

Upon the whole, though the most part of good people in Scotland could not but observe and adore the holy and righteous providence of God in the removal of this violent persecutor and spring of the most part of the former severities, at such a juncture when just upon new and violent projects, yet they could not approve of the manner of taking him off, nor would they justify the action: and the well known stanza of that excellent man, and, in his time,

good poet, Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, upon Cardinal Beaton's death, could not but come in people's minds as not inapplicable; with it I end this section and chapter :—

> 'As for this cardinal, I grant,
> He was the man we might well want,
> God will forgive it soon:
> But of a truth, the sooth to say,
> Altho' the loon be well away,
> The fact was foully done.'"[1]

Wodrow's *Collections* and his *Correspondence* make delightful reading, and the latter is a valuable authority for the period with which it deals; but it is perhaps in the *Analecta* that we see most deeply into the real man. His curiosity is insatiable. There is nothing in this world or the next which fails to excite his interest. He lives in an atmosphere of perpetual wonder: "the longer I live, the more unexpected things I meet with, and even among my old relations."[2] It matters not whether he has been shown as a treat "the portraiture of a man with a head and neck growing out at his side"[3] or whether he has met "ane Englishwoman two feet and a half

[1] *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, ed. 1829, iii. 43.

[2] *Analecta*, ed. Maitland Club, iv. 187. [3] *Ib.* i. 3.

high, and very weel proportioned, who was very smart in converse, danced and smoked tobacco";[1] or whether Earl Hyndford has told him of a remedy for the toothache;[2] or whether a thunderstorm at Giffnock has killed a cow.[3] Everything must be set down and investigated, no available source of information must be ignored.

He gleans facts in 1702 about the great Marquis of Argyle's pious habits from the only surviving member of the General Assembly of 1651;[4] his account of Mr. George Gillespie's death he owes to the dictation of Mr. Patrick Simson,[5] who farther told him that while indulged minister at Kilmacomb "he had the greatest liberty in preaching and as much success that he ever had in his ministry";[6] and he begs Mr. Stirling of the Barony "to dash down in write what he knew and had heard from old ministers before and since the Revolution."[7] The result of this application is a capital tale highly creditable to the good sense of Mr. David Dickson. Mr. Stirling's father while at school at Irvine found that his

[1] *Ib.* 22. [2] *Ib.* 290. [3] *Ib.* 307. [4] *Ib.* 22.
[5] *Ib.* 154. [6] *Ib.* ii. 32. [7] *Ib.* iii. 1.

learning Latin did not go well with him, and thought it did ill to his spiritual exercise. So he thought he was called to quit it. Mr. Dickson presently perceived the Divil working with him in that affair; and he said to him: "Do you think, John, that there is religion and serving God in nothing but prayer, reading, meditation, and hearing of preaching? Dost thou not think that, when a webster is sitting at his loom and working busy at his trade, he may be serving God as well as when praying and reading?"[1] So John goes back to his Corderius.

This is but one of many excellent anecdotes scattered through his pages. There is a very choice and characteristic one of Mr. Samuel Rutherford, a man naturally hot and fiery, and apt to run to sad heights. Mr. Alexander Jameson and a friend of Mr. Rutherford's were competing for a Regent's place at St. Andrews,

"and they were so far equal in their tryalls that the matter came to the determination of a lot. Before the casting of the lot the Principal, who was a little suspected as to his piety and principles, was appointed

[1] *Analecta*, iii. 4.

to pray: and after prayer the lot was casten and it fell on Mr. Jameson. Mr. Rutherford was extremely stormy at this, and says: 'Sirs, the prayer was not right gone about, and therefore the determination is not to be sisted in!' And without any more he rises up and prays himself, and the lot was casten over again, and it fell upon Mr. Jameson again! This perfectly confounded Mr. Rutherford, and no doubt let him see his rashness and error; and immediately he turned to Mr. Jameson and said: 'Sir, put on your gown, you have a better right to it than I have to mine!' And after that Mr. Rutherford and Mr. Jameson on nearer acquaintance were extraordinarly intimate and bigg." [1]

The tale of Mr. Robert Blair and the divinity student [2] is too well known to justify repetition; but here is a trait of the same divine, to whom Wodrow's father had complained of his slavish fear—what we should call nervousness—in public speaking and preaching. "Be not discouraged, Jacob," says Mr. Blair, "for now I have been fifty-three years in the ministry and to this day when I am to preach the sound of the third bell gives a knell to my heart and sets me almost a trembling." [3] Then there is the story of the boy who had fallen into a trance. First he

[1] *Ib.* i. 140. [2] *Ib.* 102. [3] *Ib.* 70.

had a vision of heaven—men sitting on the bonnyest seats that ever he saw, and so forth. Next he had a vision of hell: where *inter alios* "he saw his uncle . . . who lives in Glasgow and is a very great swearer and a wicked man, hinging by the tongue. This his uncle so far resented that he swore he should send him to hell himself, and Mr. Thomas Brown was obliged to go to him and get him to promise to do no hurt to the boy." [1]

There was a great deal of human nature in the minister of Eastwood, a great deal of common sense, and a strong hankering after the marvellous. Dr. Sinclair tells him that about three months since he dreamed that four of his teeth fell out of his head, and that same following day he had ane letter and ane accompt of his neice's death.[2] The connexion between the two events is assumed rather than demonstrated. There is likewise an extraordinary story of a young man who came back from abroad after six or seven years' absence to find his *fiancée* just dead. An old man meets him and gives him three pills to administer to the corpse, which he does.

[1] *Analecta*, i. 51. [2] *Ib.* 6.

The girl recovers, and the young man marries her. A friend suspects she is a devil, and indeed "is very much persuaded to that effect." At his suggestion, the husband lays her down on the bed where he found her, when she "immediately became a dead corpse half consumed." "This had need to be well attested," remarks Wodrow, "and I have writt to Mr. Reid anent it."[1]

Best of all, perhaps, is the following. Mr. Campbell of Craigie, riding home, hears a voice :

"'Well, believe me or not, it's true I tell you, and you ought to take heed to it! When you go home, your wife is expecting you to supper; and there is a hen roasting at the fire for you, but do not taste it, for it's poisoned!' He reached home, and when he entered his house saw a hen roasting. He was then in some perplexity, and asked his wife, where she had the hen? She told him the beast was brought in dead though warm, and sold by a woman under a very ill fame for witchcraft. He went to prayer and asked light from God. He was in a great strait betwixt a just care of his own health and taking a warning from an evil spirit. However, at supper he cut up the hen, which looked well and no way discoloured, which made him incline to eat her.

[1] *Ib.* 352.

Just at this instant a little dog came into the room, and it struck him in the mind to try an experiment on the dog; and he cast a piece of the hen to the dog, who had no sooner eat of it but he swelled and dyed! This cleared his way and he eat none of the hen . . . The fact is sufficiently vouched and may be depended on."[1]

In short, turn where you will, there is entertainment to be found on every page. If history be your concern, there is an admirable explanation of Montrose's position, given by himself to Mr. James Guthrie when taxed with breach of the Covenant;[2] and there is the severe but not, I fear, unjust description of James VI. as "an unclean pultron."[3] If the psychology of Calvinism be your hobby, you will meet with many solid, judicious Christians with extraordinary enlargement in private covenanting and a strange gale in their sermons. The connoisseur in Presbyterian eloquence will find many curious samples, such as that attributed to Mr. Neil Gillies, preaching in the Tron Kirk, Glasgow, as the tears dropped down from his cheeks on to the precentor: "Lord, what wilt Thou do with us? It seems Thou art resolved to flit from among us,

[1] *Analecta*, iv. 110. [2] *Ib.* i. 161. [3] *Ib.* ii. 326.

when thou art packing up some of thy best plenishing!"[1] And we can almost hear the groan which Wodrow tells us that Mr. Alexander Dunlop had at the end of some sentences.[2]

Whatever Wodrow handles he puts into the same homely, straightforward, unaffected language; the language which he doubtless used in everyday life in conversation with "my dear Peggy," and in going out and in among his parishioners. No three Scotsmen could be imagined more different superficially than Robert Wodrow, James Boswell, and plain John Campbell, Lord Chancellor of England. Nevertheless they are all "monks of the same cell," as Mackenzie has it. They possessed the inquisitive mind, the percipient eye, and the fellow-feeling for all that is human. And their privilege consequently was to impart a perennial interest to everything which they chose to commit to paper.

[1] *Ib.* 336. [2] *Ib.* iii. 21.

IV.

THE CHANGE AFTER THE REVOLUTION: THE THREE GREAT FIGURES—HUME, ROBERTSON, SMITH: THE ENDEAVOUR TO WRITE ENGLISH: LORD KAMES.

IV.

With the Revolution Settlement comes a marked change in the intellectual atmosphere. There is still plenty of acrimonious wrangling, and there will be for years, but somehow it does not matter so much. The dragon's teeth have been extracted, the horrible nightmare of the Covenant is dispelled for good and all. The King, following the example of Oliver, presently suspends the sittings of the General Assembly for a year or two. It is true that he fails to realise his ideal of a comprehension, and that he is obliged to concede a tolerably wide license to the self-constituted Presbyterian majority. It is also true that in the last decade of the seventeenth century, a wretched youth called Aikenhead is hanged for blasphemy, mainly through the pious exertions of the Edinburgh city ministers. But there is a different feeling in the air; the extreme

men are not embraced in the bosom of an "Erastian" church; and people feel at liberty to devote themselves to the ordinary business of life.

These alterations did not escape the sensitive and observant Wodrow. He notes that many old ministers that used to be extraordinarily useful in conversion, "since the Revolution was only almost made use of for comfort and confirmation."[1] In conversation with Mr. Hutcheson in 1708, Wodrow asked him what differences he remarked between the gospel now and in his young days? He answered: "The gospel was never more purely preached, but the success is away. Aye, Robert, in my young days I never almost set foot in a pulpit or tent but I gripped two or three." And then he goes on to tell Mr. Wodrow of "the best day he ever had in public," at Eastwood first communion in Mr. Crawford's time, on the seal of the Spirit; and how even then the divil, by striking in with an expression of his, "that folk that had received tokens and not communicat, and had given them back, had given back God's

[1] *Analecta*, i. 129.

arles," got leave to distract a woman in Cathcart.[1]

The same chronicler notes the vast influence of ruling elders in the Assembly of 1711: "I own several of them are great blessings and very useful, but I fear they prove a dead weight upon this Church":[2] surely a significant symptom. The old confidence in the interpretation of the enigmatical observes of pious, solid, serious, exercised Christians is shaken. All through the winter of 1713, Jean Biggart had been exceedingly straitened in wrestling and prayer as to the Parliament. [It was in the previous year, remember, that toleration had been granted to Episcopalians, Erastian oaths imposed, and patronage restored.] And still that place was brought before her, "Our hedges are broken down!"[3] Jean was at a loss whether to apply the passage to the Church in general or to Neilston in particular. Wodrow thinks that providences have applied it plainly enough to both. Without a much more minute knowledge of the local history of Neilston than most people can pretend to, it is difficult to test

[1] *Ib.* 131. [2] *Ib.* 331. [3] *Ib.* ii. 173.

the soundness of Wodrow's opinion. But there is certainly an absence of the brave old manner of thrusting your own interpretation of the oracle down everybody's throat.

The minister of Eastwood is also constrained to record in 1724 a melancholy change for the worse in the younger clergy. Many of them "speak lightly of the government of the Church and Church power, and make little conscience of attending the judicatories, and are falling in with the fashionable English way of preaching in harangues and without heads; and love to call grace virtue, and other ways of speaking which differ much from our good old way in this Church."[1] The practice is creeping in of reading two chapters of the Scripture from the pulpit before forenoon's work.[2] There is public allowing of comedies in Glasgow in 1728.[3] The last witch has been burnt in Sutherland in 1722. In the year succeeding Wodrow's death a statute will be passed by the Parliament of Great Britain repealing the Acts against witchcraft. Moreover, the "non-subscribing principle" has obtained a strong hold upon many of the

[1] *Analecta*, iii. 155. [2] *Ib.* 203. [3] *Ib.* iv. 9.

Glasgow students, who assume the name of "bright young men."[1] A distinguished historian has drawn a comparison between the bright young men of 1730 who were shy of the Confession of Faith, and the bright young men of to-day who suffer from the same complaint, entirely to the advantage of the latter.[2] I am unable to see why we should attribute lofty motives to the one set, and low motives to the other. The true *differentia*, I suspect, is that the bright spirits of 1730 desired to get away from some of the doctrines, while the bright spirits of our own time desire to get away from most of the facts. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that the distinction is a sound one, which is drawn by another eminent historian, between the earlier and the later school of "Moderates" in the eighteenth century.[3] It can scarcely be denied that the orthodox Christian faith sat very lightly indeed upon certain latitudinarians of the later school, whom it is, in truth, by no means easy to discriminate from deists.

[1] *Ib.* iii. 203.

[2] Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, ed. 1911, iii. 383-4.

[3] Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland*, 1910, 195 *et seq.*

That men's minds were now free to attend to other matters than theology was evinced by numerous indications positive as well as negative. There was a great revival of interest in Scottish literature; and with that revival three names are closely associated: James Watson, whose *Choice Collection of Scots Poems* appeared in 1706 and 1711; Thomas Ruddiman, Keeper of the Advocates' Library; and Allan Ramsay. The part played by Ramsay in preserving many snatches of song which but for him might have perished, is well known. Not so well known, perhaps, is the part he played as the proprietor of the chief circulating library in the capital. Let us appeal to the testimony of Wodrow. "All the villanous, profane, and obscene books and plays," says that worthy divine,

"printed at London by Curle and others, are got down from London by Allan Ramsay, and lent out for an easy price to young boys, servant weemen of the better sort, and gentlemen, and vice and obscenity dreadfully propagated. Ramsay has a book in his shop wherein all the names of those that borrow his plays and books, for twopence a night, or some such rate, are set down; and by these wickedness

of all kinds are dreadfully propagat among the youth of all sorts. My informer, my Lord Grange, tells me he compleaned to the Magistrates of this, and they scrupled at medling in it, till he moved that his book of borrowers should be inspected, which was done, and they were allarumed at it, and sent some of their number to his shop to look throu some of his books; but he had notice an hour before, and had withdrawn a great many of the worst, and nothing was done to purpose."[1]

Lord Grange was, no question, a sanctimonious hypocrite. Yet nobody who has any idea what the novels and plays of 1727 were like will be disposed to taunt Wodrow with narrow-mindedness. Honest Allan would have done well to exercise the judicious censorship which modern librarians are believed to put in force, though his task would have been an arduous one. We are sometimes puzzled by the contemptuous way in which serious critics in the eighteenth century speak of the art of fiction. Blair, for example, deals with it at the end of a chapter devoted to the Dialogue and Epistolary writing. Romances and novels, he tells us, constitute "a very numerous though in general a very insignificant

[1] *Analecta*, iii. 155.

class of writings."[1] Most "characteristical novels," he adds (*i.e.* novels of character), tend oftener to dissipation and idleness than to any good purpose.[2] Our surprise will disappear, and we shall acquit Blair of any calculated eccentricity of judgment, when we recollect the immense mass of great fiction which has been bestowed upon the public since he lectured. To think of Scott, of Dickens, of Thackeray, and of Miss Austen is enough. Let us only hope that the strenuous efforts of the neurotic beings who love to dabble in what is foul and of bad report, will fail to convert the circulating library once more into the "evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge" which it was in the time of Sir Anthony Absolute.

Another phenomenon in the Scottish *aufklärung*, if the pedantic expression may be pardoned, is the emerging of our Universities from a condition of comparative obscurity into the full blaze of European celebrity. A condition precedent of this fortunate transition was the establishment of the professorial monopoly which in the following century was to be so

[1] *Lectures*, ed. 1845, 441. [2] *Ib.* 445.

fiercely attacked. It was the same alike in Arts and in Science. The chairs were filled by first-rate men whose lectures it was a pleasure to listen to, and who exerted an influence which extended far beyond their respective class-rooms. The awakening of the Universities, too, was but one manifestation of the general revival of intellectual interest among the educated classes. It is difficult for us to understand the enthusiasm with which grown-up men flung themselves into the struggle for knowledge, and debated in quasi-social gatherings vexed questions of philosophy and metaphysics. Nor was the zeal for improvement confined to merely speculative matters. Art, manufactures, and agriculture partook handsomely of the benefits which the mental activity of the age brought in its train. Men of considerable powers and marked aptitude for academic discussion devoted their leisure to planting trees, and to making two blades of corn grow where only one had grown before.

It was a wholesome feature of the movement that it was never captured by a professional literary class, dependent for subsistence upon

its pen. Edinburgh had no room for a superior Grub Street. Most of the *literati* held preferment in the Church or the Universities, usually in both. The remainder had won distinction in the law. David Hume seems to be the one illustrious exception; yet even he found employment in the public service, and his habitual companions were the sort of men I have indicated. That they were all a little too prone to self-satisfaction, a little too much inclined to think that they had attained the *ne plus ultra* of wisdom, and that theirs was the final word on every controverted topic, is possibly true. These faults have been conspicuous in every generation which solemnly believes itself to be enlightened, which thinks with Lord Macaulay that "the victories of reason once gained are gained for eternity"[1] (surely the most fatuous sentence ever penned by a clever man). But a certain amount of self-congratulation may well be condoned in those who did so much to rehabilitate the good name of their country in the opinion of the civilised world.

Now, one formidable problem confronted the men I have been speaking of down to very

[1] *Complete Works*, xi. 459.

nearly the end of the century, and that was, how to write English. In the previous lectures I have put forward the view that by the time of the Revolution, if not earlier, English was the language for literary purposes of the nobility and those who moved in high official life. It was not, however, from that class that the *illuminati* of the eighteenth century were drawn. Their native *speech* was the Scots idiom. Some, like Dr. Robertson, were very broad in their pronunciation, others, like Dr. Carlyle, were comparatively refined and correct. But their daily conversation abounded in what they fully recognised to be Scotticisms. You remember how the ridiculous experiment was tried in the latter half of the century of importing into Edinburgh an Irishman with an appalling brogue for the purpose of imparting to those who sought his assistance a pure English accent.

The spoken language, however, could look after itself. How were its peculiarities to be eliminated from the written language? How were Scotsmen to write with credit to themselves—to write without incurring the ridicule of English critics? Anything resembling the

Scots of the early sixteenth century was out of the question as a medium of expression. It was obsolete. The greater gentry had discarded it. In so far as it survived, it was monopolised by fanatics and enthusiasts, who sought to conciliate the goodwill of the lower classes by a copious use of undignified and even ludicrous phraseology. The problem is well stated by Beattie: the prime difficulty is

"to give a vernacular cast to the English we write. . . . We who live in Scotland are obliged to study English from books like a dead language. Accordingly, when we write we write it like a dead language, which we understand but cannot speak. Our style is stately and unwieldy, and clogs the tongue in pronunciation, and smells of the lamp. We are slaves to the language we write, and are continually afraid of making *gross* blunders, and when an easy, familiar, idiomatical phrase occurs, dare not adopt it if we recollect no authority, for fear of Scotticisms. . . . An English author of learning is the master, not the slave, of his language, and wields it gracefully because he wields it with ease and with full assurance that he has the command of it. . . . At Edinburgh it is commonly said by your critical people that Hume, Robertson, &c. write English better than the English themselves: than which in my judgment there cannot be a greater absurdity. I would as soon believe that Thuanus wrote better Latin than Cicero or Caesar,

and that Buchanan was a more elegant poet than Virgil or Horace."[1]

The remedy prescribed by Beattie is to be continually poring upon Addison, Swift, and Lord Lyttelton. He is convinced that the greater part of Scottish authors hurt their style by admiring and imitating one another. And he and David Hume also adopted an eminently practical safeguard. They compiled a list of Scotticisms to be carefully avoided.[2] They were not to say "allenarly" for "only"; or to enquire "What airt is the wind in?" The proper question is, "From what quarter does the wind blow?" They were not to talk of "coarse weather," meaning bad weather; or of "no dubiety" instead of "no doubt"; or of paying the tailor's "account" in place of his "bill." They were to beware of "feeling a smell," or of "condescending upon" facts in lieu of "specifying" them, or of asking for "a clean plate" at meals. Words peculiar to the law of Scotland, indeed, must admittedly be used by Scotch lawyers. But in history, and

[1] *Apud* Tytler's *Kames*, ii. 157 n.

[2] See Hume's *Essays*, ed. Green and Grose, ii. 461; and *Scoticisms*, Edin. 1787.

in all elegant writing, they should be avoided. If unavoidable, they ought to be explained and printed in a different character, as if they were words of a foreign tongue.

Such are a few of the numerous directions for the correct writing of English which men of the highest eminence were not ashamed to pay attention to. I think myself that the result of their painful efforts was thoroughly satisfactory. It is true that there is a certain want of ease about Dr. Robertson's style, but no one can say that it is obtrusive, and few writers hailing from the other side of the Tweed have written with the same exquisite lucidity as David Hume.

The three great names in our eighteenth century prose are, of course, David Hume, William Robertson, and Adam Smith. I do not propose to dwell at any length on this illustrious trio, for everything that can be said about them has been often said already. It would scarcely be profitable to analyse once more Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, or Robertson's *Charles V.*, or Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which was once the apocalypse of the optimists, and from which our modern vision-

aries can extract so little encouragement. Yet I find it difficult to part from our great empirical philosopher without calling attention once more to his immeasurable superiority to all other thinkers of that school. Petulant sentimentalists like Mr. John Mill are unworthy to unloose his shoe's latchet; while to mention ridiculous and inhuman system-mongers, like the late Mr. Spencer, in the same breath with him would be palpably absurd.

One of Hume's prime merits is that he does not demolish accepted ethical doctrines with a view to erecting a new idol of his own and eloquently exhorting mankind to fall down and worship it. This is the manner of most sceptical philosophers, who are apt to be as notable pulpiteers as their orthodox opponents. It is tempting to whisper in their ears the ever-memorable reply of Charles II. to the Duke of York, who had warned him of a conspiracy against his life and was anxious to disclaim all complicity in it: "Depend upon it, brother, they will never kill *me* to make *you* king." If our *mumpsimus* with all its associations is to be ruthlessly brushed aside in obedience to the imperious dictates of "science," we are

most assuredly not to accept some one else's *sumpsimus* in its room, and transfer to it the feelings of regard and veneration which have been demonstrated to be unworthy of reasoning men. Having thrown off the cramping fetters of one dogma we are not to submit to the equally uncomfortable handcuffs of another. On the contrary, we are going to enjoy ourselves.

It is this air of detachment which is so admirable in Hume. He undermines the foundations, not merely of revealed and of natural religion, but, of science itself and of all human knowledge. Yet he is scarcely a zealot even for his own opinions. "I was resolved," he writes to Kames, "not to be an enthusiast in philosophy while I was blaming other enthusiasms."[1] Disconcerting as his speculations must needs be, a game of backgammon and a few hours spent in congenial society will restore the reader's equanimity. Before long he will believe once more in cause and effect. No one will be a penny the worse. It is indeed agreeable to come across a sceptic who neither preaches nor cants.

[1] Tytler's *Kames*, i. 86.

I should also like to say a word on Hume and Robertson as historians. Their historical works are essentially of the class which no gentleman's library should be without, but which, I suspect, very few gentlemen nowadays take the trouble to read. In one sense they have undoubtedly been superseded, yet in another sense they never will be. Dr. Blair in his *Lectures* has some very judicious remarks upon historical writing. History, he points out,

"is a very dignified species of composition. There must be no meanness nor vulgarity in the style" (those modern historians will perhaps be good enough to note who think proper to season their works with a liberal infusion of senseless and objectionable schoolboy slang); "no affectation of pertness nor of wit. The smart or sneering manner of telling a story is inconsistent with the historical character. I do not say that an historian is never to let himself down. He may sometimes do it with propriety in order to diversify the strain of his narrative, which if it be perfectly uniform is apt to become tiresome. But he should be careful never to descend too far; and on occasions where a light or ludicrous anecdote is proper to be recorded, it is generally better to throw it into a note than to hazard becoming too familiar by introducing it into the body of his work."

"But an historian," goes on the learned Doctor, "may possess these qualities of being perspicuous, distinct, and grave, and may notwithstanding be a dull writer; in which case we shall reap little benefit from his labours. We shall read him without pleasure; or most probably we shall soon give up reading him at all. He must therefore study to render his narration interesting, which is the quality that chiefly distinguishes a writer of genius and eloquence."[1]

Two things are especially conducive to this: first, a just medium in the conduct of narration between a rapid or crowded recital of facts and a prolix detail. The former embarrasses, the latter tires us. Secondly, a proper selection of circumstances belonging to those events which he chooses to relate fully. "It is this employment of circumstances in narration that is properly termed historical painting."[2]

All which appears to be thoroughly sound doctrine; and though Blair would have historical composition grave and dignified, his notions of the "dignity of history" are not

[1] *Lectures*, 424. [2] *Ib.* 425.

extravagant. He notes as an improvement in recent years the more particular attention given to laws, customs, commerce, religion, literature, "and every other thing that tends to show the spirit and genius of nations." "Whatever displays the state and life of mankind in different periods, and illustrates the progress of the human mind, is more useful and interesting than the detail of sieges and battles."[1] It is curious that a mere Edinburgh minister and professor should have anticipated the fashionable method of a century later, and not less so that he had the candour to give the credit for this improvement to "the celebrated M. Voltaire." The main point, however, of Blair's theory seems to lie in the sentence which I take the liberty of repeating: The historian "must study to render his narrative interesting, which is the quality that chiefly distinguishes a writer of genius and eloquence."

It is very refreshing for the natural man to find a view which he has always secretly cherished corroborated by an eminent authority on Rhetoric and the Belles Lettres.

[1] *Ib.* 433.

Hume and Robertson, whatever their demerits, *do* possess this essential quality. I do not suppose there are any here prepared to maintain the crude opinion that there is a necessary antagonism between history that is interesting and history that is scientific, in other words, that history has nothing to do with literature. The example of the late Mr. Maitland would probably be sufficient to refute such a contention. But if any devotee of science chooses to turn up his nose at historians who are considerate enough to deck their work with literary graces, and insists upon something really dry, we can recommend him at once to repair to Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes (1726-1792). Far be it from me to disparage his standing among our historical investigators. He was perhaps the first of our enquirers who followed religiously the maxim that bids us *petere fontes*; and he did noble work in clearing the ground for his successors. But it would be affectation to pretend that in point of literary form his *Annals of Scotland* (1776-1779) is any better than an undigested note-book.

The story, which covers the period from

1057 to 1371, is told in strict chronological sequence from year to year, and there is an appendix, also arranged chronologically, of trivial "miscellaneous occurrences," such as the apparition of a comet or an aurora, or the visitation of a great dearth. It is much to be regretted that Lord Hailes should not have reduced the results of his labours to more attractive shape, for he was, not merely a learned and industrious, but, an acute and accomplished man. This is abundantly attested by his *Inquiry into the Secondary causes which Mr. Gibbon has assigned for the rapid growth of Christianity* (1786) : a little book which is a model in point of controversial tone, and which, as regards substance, is remarkably successful in meeting some of the main points taken in the fifteenth chapter of the *Decline and Fall.* At all events, it is to be noted that Gibbon never published a rejoinder.

Dismissing, then, from our consideration, for the reasons already stated, the prose writers of the very first rank, I propose to devote the remainder of this lecture to a man whom it would be manifestly absurd to place so high,

but who in all respects is peculiarly typical of his age and country.

Henry Home,[1] better known as Lord Kames, was born in 1696, and was apprenticed to a Writer to the Signet in 1712. His master happened to send him one evening with papers to the house of the Lord President, Sir Hew Dalrymple. Home was much impressed with the felicity of the President's domestic circle. "Happy the man," he reflected, "whose old age, crowned with honour and dignity, can thus repose itself after the useful labours of the day in the bosom of his family, amidst all the elegant enjoyments that affluence, justly earned, can command! Such are the fruits of eminence in the profession of the law!" He forthwith resolved to abandon the branch of the profession to which he had been dedicated, and he passed advocate in 1724. In 1741 he married Miss Drummond of Blair-Drummond, a property on which he was able to try such experiments in agriculture as commended themselves to his alert and enterprising mind. He was raised to the bench in 1752, and there he

[1] *Life*, by A. Fraser Tytler, 2 vols., 1807.

sat up till a few days before his death thirty years later. The characteristic words in which he bade farewell to his brethren are too well known to call for repetition here.

Such is the bare outline of an extraordinarily busy and various life. In universality of interests he reminds us of Lord Brougham, though it is only fair to say that Kames was a much sounder and a much better equipped lawyer than the versatile Chancellor. He corresponded with some of the most distinguished persons of his day: with Lord Hardwicke, on the possibility of assimilating the law of Scotland with the law of England; with Josiah Tucker on economics; with Benjamin Franklin on the American colonies; with Bishop Butler on moral philosophy; with Oswald of Dunnikier on current politics; with Dr. Thomas Reid on the philosophy of "common sense"; with Mrs. Montagu upon things in general. That he also corresponded, when a young man, with Dr. Samuel Clarke on natural religion need scarcely be mentioned. If he had *not*, he would have found himself in an insignificant minority of the population of the British islands.

Of his lucubrations on legal topics I will merely say that he is one of the few successful practising lawyers who have taken much interest in comparative jurisprudence and the general principles (if there any are) underlying all municipal systems of law. "Law, like geography," he observes, in the preface to his *Historical Law Tracts* (1759), "is taught as if it were a collection of facts merely. The memory is employed to the full, rarely the judgment." This, he opines, is not as it ought to be. "I have often amused myself," he continues, "with a fanciful resemblance of law to the river Nile. When we enter upon the municipal law of any country in its present state, we resemble a traveller who, crossing the Delta, loses his way among the numberless branches of the Egyptian river. But when we begin at the source and follow the current of law, it is in that course not less easy than agreeable, and all its relations and dependencies are traced with no greater difficulty than are the many streams into which that magnificent river is divided before it is lost in the sea."

Whether Kames's theory of instruction in law is practical may be a question, but the

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metaphor is pleasing, and, at any rate, he earned the reward for which every jurist pants, and seldom pants in vain, an "European reputation." He succeeded in "drawing" Voltaire—not perhaps a very difficult feat to perform—by some depreciatory remarks on the *Henriade* and some laudatory remarks on *Hamlet*. Voltaire, who had no misgivings with regard to the superiority of his own performance, declared that M. Home always enunciated his opinion as if it were a law, and extended his despotism over everything.[1]

There is a certain amount of truth in the criticism. He occupied every department of human thought for his province, and he was in the habit of expressing himself without diffidence or hesitation. "My Lord, you write a great deal faster than I am able to read," said Lord Monboddo to him upon one occasion; and he appears to have systematically acted upon the advice he gave to Sir Gilbert Elliot that, if he wished to get an understanding of a particular branch of political economy of which he knew nothing he ought to "go

[1] *Apud* Tytler's *Life*, ii. App. 84.

and write a book upon it."[1] From farming to freewill there was no subject upon which he was not prepared—and to a great extent qualified—to pronounce. He is obnoxious to the accusation he brings against Athanasius, "that great champion of blind credulity who for that reason has been dubbed a saint," of handling his subject with as great assurance of being in the right as if it had been revealed to him from heaven.[2] Athanasius is one of Kames's bugbears, and he returns to the charge more than once, describing his "infernal" creed as "a heap of unintelligible jargon."[3] Yet he would willingly have emulated the saint, if necessary, in defying the world on behalf of his own views. His deviations from the path of strict orthodoxy very nearly got him into trouble with the General Assembly. But his biographer, Lord Woodhouselee, hits the mark when he says that "he was much more of a dogmatist than a sceptic; his mind could never rest in doubt; and he had formed to

[1] Tytler's *Life*, ii. 163.

[2] *Loose Hints upon Education*, 179.

[3] *Sketches of the History of Man*, ii. 400.

himself a positive creed not only in all matters of theology, of philosophy, and of science, but even of taste." [1]

It does not appear whether Kames, like David Hume and Beattie, gave the unoccupied portion of his days and nights to the study of Addison and other English authors warranted to be safe models. He certainly worked out for himself a style marked by vigour and individuality, if not by smoothness and polish. "Harsh and crabbed" are the orthodox epithets applied to it in text-books. I think they are much too severe; nor am I disposed to concur in his biographer's admission that his merits lie rather in the matter than the style of his writings. We miss in Kames, he laments, "the melody of a well-ordered period." [2] To most discriminating ears, I imagine, the brusque short sentences of Kames will seem more grateful than the well-ordered periods of Tytler.

Listen to this friendly critic a little further:—

Kames "seems to have no just conception of what constitutes the chief beauty of rhetorical composition;

[1] *Life*, i. 28. [2] *Life*, ii. 159 n.

a variety in the structure of the periods both with respect to their length and the order of their component parts, so as to excite pleasure by contrast; while each is so framed as separately by its melody to fill the ear. His sentences are generally cast in the same mould; they have little variety in their form and arrangement; they are commonly too short, seldom consisting of more than one clause or proposition; or, if drawn to a greater length, they are often faulty from an involved construction. We are not unfrequently offended by a colloquial vulgarity of expression which it is difficult to account for on the supposition of carelessness, and which probably the author has mistaken for an ease and freedom of composition, or imagined to give a pleasing variety."[1]

And what are the instances cited by Tytler of "a vulgarity and lowness of diction which must offend every reader of good taste"? Here are three of them. Kames talks of showing "the cloven foot"; he says that "it is irksome to trudge along in a beaten track"; and he remarks that "to enter bluntly on a subject of such intricacy might gravel an acute philosopher." Nothing so very deadly after all. Kames's English is, at the worst, the language of a live man; not the vapid, nerve-

[1] *Life*, ii. 158.

less stuff which Tytler and so many others in his day could reel off by the yard.

Kames's *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* appeared in 1751, and were written with a view "to prepare the way for a proof of the existence and perfection of the Deity." Their value lies more in the acuteness of detached observations than in the cohesion of the fabric they attempt to construct. He has got a firm grasp of the fundamental conception of duty, and perceives that it cannot be resolved into some other conception such as fitness, or beauty, or pleasure. Dr. Clarke commits the common error of endeavouring "to substitute reason in place of feeling."[1] Shaftesbury "has not proved virtue to be our duty otherways than by shewing it to be our interest, which does not come up to the idea of duty."[2] Hutcheson's account of morality is imperfect "because it excludes justice and everything which may be strictly called duty."[3] In his account of morality the terms *right*, *obligation*, *duty*, *ought*, and *should* have no distinct meaning in them. Hume's principle is "far too faint to control

[1] *Essays*, etc. 97. [2] *Ib.* 55. [3] *Ib.* 56.

our irregular appetites and passions." Upon his system as well as Hutcheson's "the noted terms of *duty*, *obligation*, *ought*, and *should*, etc., are perfectly unintelligible."[1]

These trenchant criticisms go straight to the point, and, all through, the author displays great shrewdness and ingenuity. He is not inclined to take anything for granted, and some of his questions are more easily asked than answered. His chapter on the different orders of moral beauty is stimulating and suggestive. "No man," he points out, "thinks so highly of himself or of another for having done a just as for having done a generous action. Yet every one must be sensible that justice is more essential than generosity to the order and preservation of society."[2] The reason is that we feel bound as by external compulsion to some duties and not to others.

The third essay is devoted to the old theme of Liberty and Necessity, which he handles with great candour and without attempting to evade its difficulties. On the one hand, he is driven to the conclusion that "there is nothing in the whole universe that can

[1] *Essays*, 58. [2] *Ib.* 69.

properly be called contingent; that may or may not be.... But every motion in the natural, and every determination and action in the moral, world, are directed by immutable laws: so that whilst these laws remain in their force not the smallest link of the universal chain of causes and effects can be broken, nor any one thing be otherways than it is."[1] On the other hand, he recognises with equal frankness the force of the contention that upon the necessitarian theory moral responsibility absolutely disappears. "This difficulty," he says, "is great and never has been surmounted by the advocates for necessity."[2] He finds the solution of the problem in the fact that man has been formed "with such feelings and notions of contingency as would fit him for the part he has to act."[3] Responsibility, in other words, is brought back because man is under the delusion that he is a responsible agent. This hardly seems a satisfactory way out.

The Elements of Criticism,[4] which appeared in 1762, is an elaborate attempt to ascertain

[1] *Ib.* 181. [2] *Ib.* 196. [3] *Ib.* 187.
[4] 5th ed. 3 vols. 1774.

the standard of taste. The author's intention is to exhibit the fundamental principles of the fine arts "drawn from human nature; the true source of criticism."[1] His method is to be inductive: he is to proceed from facts and experiments to principles. He admits that taste is not an affair of morals. "A man is not within the reach of censure even where he prefers the Saracen's head upon a sign-post before the best tablature of Raphael, or a rude Gothic tower before the finest Grecian building."[2] Yet he is confident that principles can be arrived at, and that all is not caprice. The upshot of the enquiry is that "the common sense of mankind, however languid and cloudy, is the only standard" in the fine arts as well as in morals.[3] But what is meant by "the common sense of mankind"? A wary choice is necessary: to collect votes indifferently would certainly mislead us. "Those who depend for food upon bodily labour are totally devoid of taste: of such a taste at least as can be of use in the fine arts. This consideration bars the greater part of mankind; and of the remaining part many, by a corrupted taste, are

[1] *Essays*, i. 13. [2] *Ib.* ii. 487. [3] *Ib.* 499.

unqualified for voting. The common sense of mankind must then be confined in the few that fall not under these exceptions."[1] The constituency thus becomes exceedingly select, and we seem to be back at the old familiar circle. The criterion of good taste is to be found in the judgment of a certain tribunal; and if you ask who compose that tribunal, the only answer is—Why, persons who possess good taste.

In the considerable space that intervenes between the commencement of the investigation and this its rather impotent conclusion there is much that is interesting and worthy of attention. Kames may be wayward and perverse, but he is never merely foolish. "No criticism," said David Hume, "can be instructive which descends not to particulars and is not full of examples and illustrations."[2] Kames was of the same mind, and has provided abundance of illustrative passages drawn from many authors in all languages. They are well chosen, and demonstrate the penetration and vigilance of his mind, as well as the extensive range of his studies. I have

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Apud* Tytler's *Kames*, i. 327.

no time to discuss his criticism in detail, and can do no more than note his soundness on the great subject of Shakespeare.

The *Sketches of the History of Man*, which appeared in 1774, contains an immense mass of miscellaneous information which it would serve no good purpose to analyse, but which at least shows that he practised what he preached: to wit, the regular use of a commonplace-book. Advancing years had not impaired the sharp edge of his intellect or dulled his keen eye for an opponent's sophistry. Thus he explodes Locke's doctrine that a minority which objects to taxation must be held to be taxed by its own consent:[1] a fallacy which had been brought to the front again by the dispute with the American colonies. Among other things which he notes are that "a luxurious table, covered with every dainty, seems to be the favourite idol of the English;"[2] that the same nation "high and low, rich and poor, are remarkable for cleanliness all the world

[1] *Sketches*, etc. i. 461.

[2] *Ib.* 347. "A minister of state never withstands a feast, and the link that unites those in opposition is the cramming one another."

over ; "[1] and that Madrid, Lisbon, and Cadiz are "nauseously nasty" towns.[2] He discreetly abstains from telling us where Edinburgh stands in comparison with these peninsular cities.

Perhaps his most curious passage is an attack upon the English public schools. Young men, he tells us, are there trained up to selfishness, not to patriotism. "*Keep what you get and get what you can*, is the chief lesson inculcated at Westminster, Winchester, and Eton."[3] I have always understood that it was the absence of the commercial spirit from these venerable institutions which our modern reformers deplore. In Kames's time, "students put themselves in the way of receiving vails from strangers ; and that dirty practice continues, though far more poisonous to manners than the giving vails to menial servants, which the nation is now ashamed of."[4] One cannot help wondering for how much they "touched" the old judge, if he ever visited Henry's holy shade.

It is, however, in his *Loose hints upon Education, chiefly concerning the culture of the heart*, published in 1781, the year before his

[1] *Ib.* 233. [2] *Ib.* 235. [3] *Ib.* 450. [4] *Ibid.*

death, that Lord Kames is discovered in his best and most characteristic vein. His purpose is "to evince that the culture of the heart during childhood is the chief branch of education."[1] It should be explained, perhaps, *in limine* that Kames lived in a period in which luxury had attained an unprecedented pitch, patriotism and manhood had wofully decayed, and no one cared about anything except making money. In these respects his age presents a striking parallel to our own, and indeed to every other age of which we have any record since the beginning of history.

It will be generally conceded that there are few topics upon which more nonsense is more incessantly talked than education and the upbringing of children. Plenty of nonsense was also talked about it in Kames's time. If I say that his views were "enlightened," I do not mean that they were silly. I mean that, on the whole, they were common-sense views which would be accepted by the general run of people who are not in the habit of making speeches in public on the subject. Now and then he is fantastical, as when he would have

[1] *Loose Hints*, etc. v.

the children of people in easy circumstances roused from sleep every morning with music.[1] Whether it should be the music of the bagpipes or the concertina he does not indicate.

Now and then, too, he seems to hanker after unattainable ideals. He would like to see schools for teaching the science of politics erected at the expense of the public. "Sure I am," he asseverates, "that never in this island was there more occasion for such schools than in the present time—men venting doctrines even in Parliament subversive of order and good government, tending to corrupt the whole mass of the people, and to authorise every degree of licentiousness."[2] But, all things considered, he is reasonable and judicious. He nourishes, for one thing, a well-founded distrust of the perpetual interference of the man of science in education. Children are certainly impressionable. Some wiseacre has discovered the reason: children's brains are soft and moist, and their temperature is high. "What a rant is this!" exclaims his Lordship: "Words without any meaning! Here man is reduced to a mere machine, everything explained by soft and

[1] *Ib.* 44. [2] *Ib.* 25.

hard, moist and dry, hot and cold : causes that have no imaginable connexion with the effects endeavoured to be explained."[1] He would prohibit severity, which will terrify the child and "induce it to dissimulation, the worst of habits."[2] Corporal punishment should be inflicted only for obstinacy : a maxim which gives occasion for another fling at Eton, "a school in high vogue."[3] He is not in favour of making children get by heart prayers, psalms, or other dry compositions, "which they neither relish nor can well understand." Short historical ballads that make virtuous impressions should be put into their hands instead.[4] I have grave doubts whether he is right on this head. But he will by no means countenance the precious theory that children should never be denied anything they want ; and he narrates a quaint little anecdote in this connexion. "A gentleman upon a visit at a friend's house heard little master crying below stairs. The mother alarmed was told that he wanted to ride up to table upon the roast beef, and that the cook did not relish the project. The mother was for letting Dickie

[1] *Loose Hints*, 28. [2] *Ib.* 32. [3] *Ib.* 127. [4] *Ib.* 124.

have his will, but the father luckily reflected that the sirloin would probably be too hot a seat for Dickie." [1]

He insists that children should be kept as much as possible under the eye of their parents.[2] "A girl who loves her mother or her governess will work the whole day by her side without wearying, provided she be allowed to prattle, which is her favourite amusement. A girl who loves not her mother above all the world seldom turns to good." [3] In fine weather, lead your children to the fields, and point out to them the various beauties of nature.

"How beautiful that smooth plain intersected with a stream perpetually flowing; how comfortable to the eye its verdure, and how beneficial by giving food to many innocent and useful animals! Behold that gay parterre variegated with a thousand sweet colours. See that noble oak spreading its branches all around, affording a shade in summer and shelter in winter. Listen to the birds which cheer us with their music, and are busily employed in bringing forth their young." [4]

Domestic education should be protracted as long as possible. The best kind of school is a private one, admitting not above twelve or

[1] *Ib.* 40. [2] *Ib.* 129. [3] *Ib.* 136. [4] *Ib.* 165.

fifteen "disciples." This provides a proper stage for emulation, a valuable incentive to effort.[1] Children should be educated in the religion established or tolerated by law. At the same time, Kames hastens to disclaim the idea that Christianity is the only road to heaven. "It is not material in the sight of the Almighty whether the religion they have been taught is or is not orthodox, provided they be sincere: people follow naturally and innocently the faith of their parents; and the generality have no other means for embracing a revelation real or pretended."[2] It therefore behoves teachers to be on their guard against bigotry and superstition.[3] It is necessary "to describe the Deity, not only as a friend to the good, but, as an enemy of the wicked." Yet you should be "in no hurry with the latter, nor let it be mentioned till the benevolence of the Deity be deeply rooted in the mind of your children."[4] Notwithstanding all this, it is "extremely convenient that people should be of the religion of their country. Therefore, whatever unlucky doubts or scruples may haunt a man with respect to that religion,

[1] *Loose Hints*, 123. [2] *Ib.* 176. [3] *Ib.* 178. [4] *Ib.* 166.

he ought to conceal them from his children."[1] This simple code may not be very logical, but I should imagine that it has worked better in practice than more pretentious systems.

Kames has decided views about the education of girls. "Domestic concerns are the province of the wife; and nature prompts young women to qualify themselves for behaving well in that station. Young men never think of it. I know several ladies of good understanding who, at the distance of weeks, can recal to memory the particulars of every dinner they have been invited to."[2] "The time a girl bestows on her doll is a prognostic that she will be equally diligent about her offspring."[3] Women are not formed for single combat, and therefore "ought of all things to dread the making a noise in the world."[4]

"A girl of eight or nine may be trained to assist her mother in serving the guests at table. Let her be seated within reach of a pudding, or of anything that requires a little carving ready to help those who call for it. In a short time she may be employed in dissecting a chicken or even a pullet.

[1] *Ib.* 177. [2] *Ib.* 230. [3] *Ib.* 228. [4] *Ib.* 106.

The notion of being useful and behaving like her mamma inspires her with a certain dignity of behaviour and sets her above childish amusements. It has pained me to see a young woman of seventeen or eighteen applying a knife so awkwardly as with difficulty to dissect what is on her own plate. How mean must be her appearance at the head of her own table!"[1]

If you desire to correct or restrain a daughter's appetite for fine clothes, the following method among others promises success. "Load your girl with ornaments. Say to those in company that she never looked worse. One adds, Is she not pretty enough to become a more simple dress? Take away every superfluous ornament, and then commend her appearance: 'How genteel and how sweet she now looks.' The girl will acquire a taste for simplicity." Deal with boys in the same way. "Get your son a coat daubed over with gold and silver, but so ill made as to pain him. Bespeak people to ridicule him for his finery. He will be glad to change his nasty coat for one more easy and agreeable."[2]

It is preposterous in teaching a language

[1] *Loose Hints*, 111. [2] *Ib.* 96.

to begin with the grammar: another very dubious proposition. "A boy who is flogged into grammar-rules will apply them by rote like a parrot. For a knowledge of any language boys are indebted not to dry rules but to practice and observation."[1] Finally, when a boy becomes older, the advantages of matrimony should be pointed out to him in the most vivid colours. "Fix the picture of a good wife in a young man's mind, and he will not fall a prey to beauty or other external qualification of little importance in the matrimonial state. He will ask when he meets a young woman: 'She is pretty, but has she good sense? She has sense, but is she well tempered? She dances elegantly or sings with expression; but is she not vain of such trifles?'" Such are the questions which, according to Kames, the well brought-up young man will put: and we can but humbly ask in turn, Will he?

These, then, are a few specimens of the venerable Senator's "loose hints on education and the culture of the human heart." Whether we agree with them or not, we must, I think,

[1] *Ib.* 251.

admit that they exhibit him to us in a singularly kindly and favourable aspect. He had much more humour—much more human nature—in his composition than the ordinary tradition, perpetuated from book to book, would lead us to suppose. No one has ever seriously impugned his character or his honour, but his learning and intelligence have generally been undervalued. Dr. Johnson made Kames's countrymen heartily welcome to him: perhaps with no better object in view than to tease Boswell. David Hume, who possibly disliked him, declared that a man might as well think of compounding a fine sauce by a mixture of wormwood and aloes as of blending metaphysics and Scots law. I would fain hope that what has just been brought to your notice may help to disabuse you of the idea that Kames was a cantankerous and self-centred pedant. Adam Smith was not jesting when he said: "We must every one of us acknowledge Kames for our master."[1]

As I have already remarked, we could scarcely select a more typical representative of Scotland in the eighteenth century. In his

[1] Tytler's *Life*, i. 160.

biographer's words, his life was "intimately connected with every species of improvement, whether of an intellectual or a political nature, that took place in Scotland during his age."[1] He belonged, in short, to a class of man peculiar, I rather fancy, to this favoured island; a class of man to whom our debt is much heavier than most people are aware; I mean the class of the intelligent and trained "amateur." The word has acquired in current use a decidedly contemptuous signification; but the contempt is not always deserved. We have only to recall men like Colonel Mure, the historian of Greek literature, or the late Sir William Stirling Maxwell—both so closely connected with this quarter of Scotland—to be assured of that. It will be an evil day for our country when the amateur (in the honourable sense of the term) disappears, crushed out of existence between the upper millstone of the specialist and the nether millstone of "the man in the street."

[1] *Ib.* Preface.

V.

LORD MONBODDO: CAMPBELL: HUGH BLAIR: MILLAR.

V.

It seems but natural, after dealing with Lord Kames, to say something about his brother judge, James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714-1799). When we hear his name, we think vaguely of men with tails, and of "dinners after the manner of the Ancients," like the revolting meal described with such unaffected gusto in *Peregrine Pickle*. In truth, it has been Lord Monboddo's misfortune never to be taken seriously whether by his own contemporaries or by posterity. A flavour of eccentricity hangs about all he said or did, though some of his paradoxes are less startling to our generation than to his own. He was in all respects an upright and honourable man; a fine specimen of the Scots gentleman of the old school, as Boswell is constrained to testify; and nothing could be imagined more creditable to both parties than the behaviour of

"Farmer Burnett" as host and Dr. Johnson as guest when the latter dined at Monboddo on his way north.

Conversation apparently fell at once upon the topic most likely to provoke a dispute. But an amicable discussion of the merits of Homer brought the two into a good humour; so that the final argument between them, as to whether the savage or the London shopkeeper had the best existence, passed off without their mutual civility moulting a feather. Monboddo was, of course, an enthusiastic advocate for the savage, the Doctor took up the cudgels for the other. But he admitted to Boswell afterwards that he did not know but he might have taken the side of the savage equally had anybody else taken the side of the shopkeeper.[1]

While appearances were thus kept up, there was certainly no love lost between Johnson and Monboddo. Johnson discriminated thus between him and another famous champion of the noble savage and the state of nature: Rousseau knew that he was talking nonsense (an exceedingly doubtful proposition, I should

[1] Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed., Croker, one vol. 1876, 290.

have supposed), Monboddo did not. Boswell was good enough to report this dictum to the judge, who retaliated to some purpose in the fifth volume of his *Origin and Progress of Language*, published in 1789. There he pronounces the deceased lexicographer to have been "neither a scholar nor a man of taste." He attacks him with vigour for commenting unfavourably upon Milton's prose, and with no less vigour for speaking too highly of the *Paradise Lost*, and for putting it upon the same level as the *Iliad*. He certainly does not mince matters in endeavouring to overthrow the idol. "The praise and admiration," he declares, "which so many of the English nation have bestowed upon Dr. Johnson, both alive and dead, is one of the greatest disgraces that ever befell them, considered as a nation of learning and taste, and the most adverse to their national character; for Dr. Johnson was the most invidious [which, I suppose, means 'envious'] and malignant man I have ever known, who praised no author or book that other people praised, and in private conversations was ready to cavil at and contradict everything that was said, and could not with

any patience hear any other person draw the attention of the company for ever so short a time."[1] The favourite but inadmissible formula in pleading, "denied as stated," is perhaps the best rejoinder that a prudent Johnsonian can make to these accusations.

It is beyond question that Monboddo was a man of deep and extensive learning. His acquaintance with the ancient tongues went a great deal farther than Kames's, as it might well do, for Burnett had enjoyed superior educational advantages to those of Home. He valued himself more especially upon his knowledge of Greek, which he rightly thought was an indispensable qualification for the proper study of philosophy.

"The fashionable reader," he says, "accustomed to a fair and neat margin, not sullied by references and quotations, will be much disgusted by seeing the bottom of my page so loaded with authorities from learned authors; and he will particularly be offended with the pedantry of my Greek quotations, in which, I own, I abound; because they not only serve for authorities in support of what I advance, but express my meaning much better than I can do in English. ... The Greek learning," he goes on, "is not to be

[1] *Origin and Progress of Language*, v. 271.

understood without the Greek language; and I should deceive my reader if I did not let him know that, without at least a competent knowledge of that language, he can never understand the Greek philosophy. This I know will be a very disagreeable truth to the majority of my readers, who may think that by the superiority of their genius joined with the study of French, English, or perhaps Latin books, they may become philosophers; but as I do not write to flatter vanity and indolence, I must be forgiven to tell them that, if they are neither Greek scholars nor will take the trouble of becoming such, they ought to give over thoughts of philosophy.... In philosophy I have never known any man succeed who was not a scholar."

Accordingly, he hopes that his work will, at least, serve "to hinder men from thinking themselves philosophers because they may happen to be learned in natural history, experimental men, mathematicians, or astronomers."[1] A good deal of this, it may be safely conjectured, is deliberately aimed at Kames; but it is most refreshing and salutary doctrine for our own age, which has witnessed an insolent attack upon the cause of Greek at the English Universities, and its shameful betrayal in our own, with the consequent disappearance

[1] *Antient Metaphysics*, I. viii.

of the language from the curriculum of many grammar schools and academies in Scotland.

Monboddo was the author of two works, both of which appeared in serial form, so to speak, the volumes coming out at intervals during a period of years, and which overlapped in date of publication. These works are a treatise *Of the origin and progress of language*, in six volumes, 8vo, 1773–1792; and *Antient Metaphysics, or the Science of Universals*, in six volumes, 4to, 1779–1799. He was well aware that his writings made no appeal to the general public. He wrote to please himself, though somewhere or other he indulges in a grumble at the unfavourable criticism he had met with from his fellow-countrymen. "I have chosen a title," he intimates in the preface to the *Metaphysics*, "which so far from alluring readers will frighten many from opening the book; nor do I believe that there is a book-seller in Great Britain who, upon the credit of my title page, would offer me a shilling for my copy if I had a mind to sell it."[1]

He declines to embellish his writing with meretricious ornament. The style, he is

[1] *Antient Metaphysics*, I. i.

afraid, "is not of popular relish, any more than the subject: wanting that spruceness and trimness which is so fashionable at present in writings upon all subjects." "From the authors I have studied," he tells us, "I have not learned to cut philosophy into short, smart sentences after the manner of Seneca; and I should think my subject disgraced if I were to treat it in the style of Tacitus and his modern imitators among the French and British. The reader therefore is to expect nothing here but a plain and simple style, neither poetical nor oratorial, nor mixed (absurdly as I think) of both these: unadorned therefore with epithets, antitheses, and poetical descriptions, and without any ambitious ornaments of any kind."[1] This does not sound very promising, but I scarcely think that Monboddo is as bad as his word, or as dull as he threatens to be.

The purpose of the work is "to revive antient theism, particularly the theism of Plato and Aristotle." Monboddo's admiration for the ancients is unbounded, and the only modern author to whom he will acknowledge indebtedness is Cudworth. He seeks to emulate their

[1] *Ib.* ii.

methods and so to ascend by regular steps up to the Supreme Mind. "They began," he points out, "with that lowest mind or Motive Principle which is in all physical bodies, unorganized as well as organized. From thence they proceeded to the Motive Principle in the vegetable and the animal; and from the animal or sensitive nature they ascended to the rational and intellectual nature of man; and by studying this, the divine part, in our nature, they attained, as far as human capacity could attain, to the knowledge of what is most exalted in the universe and at the top of the Pyramid."[1] There must necessarily, he maintains, be a progress from the *vegetable* to the *animal*, and from the *animal* to the *intellectual*, "not only in the *individual* but in the *species*."[2]

It is such utterances, no doubt, which warrant the statement that Monboddo presents many curious points of contact with Darwinism and Neo-Kantianism.[3] The point in his teaching which caught the popular imagination was the doctrine that (to put it crudely) men are descended from monkeys. But he

[1] *Antient Metaphysics*, I. viii. [2] *Ib.*
[3] *Encycl. Brit.* 11th ed., xviii. 692.

seems to cut himself adrift from the Darwinian theory when he insists, no less emphatically, that "in nature the specieses (*sic*) of things are absolutely distinct";[1] or that "there must be a difference *specific* and not in *degree* only betwixt our *mind* and that of any other species of animal";[2] or that the differences between nations, families, and individuals are owing to Mind, and not to climate, soil, water, or food.[3] It must be allowed that he makes the class of "this most various animal, Man," comprehensive enough. He is clear that it embraces the anthropoid apes, such as the Pongo. And he believes in the existence of men with tails, a tenet which, if it was not the cause of much wit in him, was the cause of infinite wit in others.

The stock examples by which he proves his propositions as to the savage state are three in number. There is "Peter the wild boy," a sort of "natural," it would seem, who had been caught young in Hanover in the "state of nature," walking on all fours, and had been brought over to this country, where he resided at a farmer's house near Berkhampstead in

[1] *Ant. Met.* i. 132. [2] *Ib.* 133. [3] *Ib.* iii. 242.

Hertfordshire; there is the Oran Outan; and there is "the wild girl I saw in France." I enumerate these authorities in ascending order in the scale of intellect. The Oran Outan is the one most frequently referred to, and I am bound to say that they are all apt to become bores, all the more that Lord Monboddo occasionally repeats himself: an excusable enough fault in view of his mode of publication.

The chapters on Man are probably the most interesting in the book. It is there that we get the author's most characteristic views. He is a great advocate of the open air.[1] So are we all nowadays, but we do not carry our enthusiasm to his lengths, and object to houses and clothes altogether. As for the use of fire, it "only serves to aggravate the mischief of houses and clothes."[2] I could wish that his Lordship had been spared to see a coal-strike. The admissibility of fire even in the dressing of food is very doubtful. The most natural food of man is vegetables, not prepared by fire: "the Oran Outan eats nothing else." None of your "carrot cutlets," and "turnip tournedos" for him or for Lord Monboddo.

[1] *Ant. Met.* iii. 80. [2] *Ib.* 92.

"The wild boy Peter, who was once in the perfect natural state, even after he was caught and brought to England, delighted in no food so much as raw herbage."[1] The flesh of animals is of course *taboo* as food, nor is any other beverage allowed but water. "It is evident," he announces, "that nothing but a bad and unnatural habit of body produced by the custom of drinking spirits can make the use of them, even in small quantities, tolerable to us."[2] How comes it then that men indulge in this intolerable custom and so produce this bad and unnatural habit of body? That is a question which is, judiciously perhaps, left unanswered.

Monboddo is a great believer in water for external as well as internal use. He would like to see public baths erected in the Highlands for the benefit of the inhabitants, who never change their shirts, once they put them on, till they are reduced to rags.[3] If Churchill's satires contain any germ of truth the baths were certainly much needed. The *Metaphysics* winds up with a most interesting chapter on the condition of Scotland, in which Monboddo

[1] *Ib.* 94. [2] *Ib.* 99. [3] *Ib.* v. 22.

deplores rural depopulation and the swallowing up of small lairds by great. Though a zealot for the improvement of agriculture (and it is recorded that one night he went out with a lighted candle to take a look at a field of turnips), he insists that it ought not to be carried out at the expense of the farmers and cottars. "There are many in Scotland," he says, "who call themselves improvers, but who I think are rather *desolators* of the country. Their method is to take into their possession several farms, which no doubt they improve by cultivation. But after they have done so they set them off all to one tenant, instead of perhaps five or six who possessed them before."[1] He specially commends his neighbour, Mr. Barclay of Urie, for not falling into their error;[2] and he himself in the management of his estate was careful to avoid it.

The origin and progress of Language contains perhaps less of general interest than the *Metaphysics*. Language, in Monboddo's opinion, is not "natural" to man. It is an "acquired habit," like walking upright. It would never have come into existence but for the growth

[1] *Ant. Met.* v. 309. [2] *Ib* 297.

of political society, and it originated in natural inarticulate cries. As the poet has sung:

"*O! O!* was the signal of pain;
Ha! Ha! was the symptom of laughter;
Pooh! Pooh! was the sign of disdain;
And *Hillo!* came following after."[1]

Starting with these elementary propositions, he proceeds to a long discussion on the art of language, in which he analyses the formal and the material part of speech and composition, including style and rhetoric. The work is obviously designed to compete with Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, and it contains a great deal that is ingenious and suggestive. I must not, however, dwell any longer on Monboddo. He may or may not have made some lasting addition to human thought; but at any rate he lets us see the ideas which were passing in his time through a mind naturally acute and diligently cultured. Above all, he is valuable as a fanatical adherent of the creed which divides man into the "natural" and the "civilised," and pronounces the former to be very much better. It has ceased in this form for the present to be a popular variety of the "good old times" fallacy.

[1] *Songs and Verses*, by an Old Contributor, 17.

It must, I take it, have been due to the deliberate and persevering endeavour to write English that so much attention was directed in Scotland to the art of composition in verse and prose alike. Kames and Monboddo have already been mentioned A third expositor of the subject was the eminent Principal of the Marischal College, Aberdeen, George Campbell (1719–1796), best known for his *Dissertation on Miracles*, in reply to David Hume. His *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History*, published after his death, in 1799, are good reading, and it is right to mention that, while he was essentially a "Moderate," he "highly disapproved" (to use his biographer's words) "of the modern Socinians or rationalists, who attempt to explain away the peculiar doctrines of the gospel." The *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, which appeared in 1776, was for long accepted as a standard text-book on the subject. Its three divisions deal with the nature and foundations of eloquence, the foundations and essential properties of elocution, and the discriminating properties of elocution.

The work goes too much into detail on many points to admit of profitable summary

here. In some of his observations the Principal seems apt to be a little captious. He objects, for example, to the locution: "He sings a good song" for "He sings well." To which objection it may be replied, in the first place, that the two expressions do not mean quite the same thing; they convey two distinct shades of meaning, though it would not be easy to explain the distinction. And, in the second place, it may be pointed out that, if they *do* mean precisely the same thing, the one to which Campbell takes exception appears to be decidedly the more lively and idiomatic. But, upon the whole, Campbell's criticisms on grammar and style show sound common sense and not a little sagacity.

The most celebrated, however, of all such pieces is the *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* of Dr. Hugh Blair (1718-1800), the first holder of the Chair of those subjects founded in the University of Edinburgh in 1762. He held it for twenty-one years, along with one of the charges of the High Kirk; and on demitting office communicated his Lectures through the medium of the press to the general public. His *Sermons* enjoyed an

enormous popularity, but have for many years sunk into an oblivion from which I am not in the meanwhile to attempt to recall them. His *Lectures* appear to be more worthy of consideration.

It must be owned that they do not open too auspiciously. "One of the most distinguished privileges," we read, "which Providence has conferred upon mankind is the power of communicating their thoughts to one another. Destitute of this power, reason would be a solitary, and, in some measure, an unavailing principle."[1] Such an *exordium* is not promising. It opens out a vista of flaccid eighteenth century platitude which might well deter the stoutest heart from proceeding farther. But we have not long to wait before we come to better stuff; something much more manly and bracing. His purpose (so he tells us) is to substitute the application of the principles of reason for artificial and scholastic rhetoric: "to explode false ornament, to direct attention more towards substance than show, to recommend good sense as the foundation of all good composition, and

[1] *Lectures*, ed. 1845, 1.

simplicity as essential to all true ornament."[1] A laudable object, truly. "Knowledge and science must furnish the materials that form the body and substance of any valuable composition." (In other words, you must have straw to make your bricks of). "Rhetoric serves to add the polish; and we know that none but firm and solid bodies can be polished well":[2] surely a rather happy trope or metaphor. He divides his work into five parts, dealing respectively with taste, language, style, eloquence, and lastly a critical examination of the most distinguished species of composition both in prose and verse.

What he has to say on taste is not radically different from Lord Kames's "message." Taste cannot be resolved into any operation of reason. "It seems more nearly allied to a feeling of sense than to a process of the understanding."[3] No principle of the human mind, he admits, "is in its operations more fluctuating and capricious than taste."[4] Men's tastes may vary and yet none of them be wrong. Nevertheless, reason assists taste in many of its operations, and serves to enlarge

[1] *Ib.* 2. [2] *Ib.* 3. [3] *Ib.* 9. [4] *Ib.* 14.

its power. In spite of the familiar proverb, there must be some standard of taste, which may be defined as "the power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and art."[1] No one will maintain that he is to be charged with no defect or incapacity "who thinks a common news-writer as excellent an historian as Tacitus."[2] True criticism is just the application of taste and good sense to the several fine arts; and criticism is an art "wholly founded on experience."[3]

In every work of taste, Blair lays it down, "the public is the supreme judge to whom the last appeal must be made," for the standard of taste "is founded on the sentiments that are natural and common to all men."[4] Kames, you may remember, had said very much the same thing, and in this matter both he and Blair seem to hold out a hand to Dr. Thomas Reid. Where they diverge is in the meaning they attach to "the public." Kames frankly goes in for packing his jury. He challenges juror after juror until he has reduced the number of those qualified to serve to something

[1] *Lectures*, 9. [2] *Ib.* 15.
[3] *Ib.* 20. [4] *Ib.* 22.

comparatively insignificant.[1] Blair's method is quite different. He would appeal, so to speak, from Philip drunk to Philip sober. He is quite willing to accept as the ultimate tribunal the public in the ordinary sense of the word; but then it must not be the contemporary public. It must be a public which has had time to digest and to reflect. Given such conditions, "the judgment of true criticism and the voice of the public, when once become unprejudiced and dispassionate, will ever coincide at last."[2]

Take the case of Shakespeare's plays. They are admittedly highly irregular. But they have gained the public admiration "not by their transgressions of the rules of art, but in spite of such transgressions."

"Shakespeare," he continues, "pleases, not by his bringing the transactions of many years into one play; not by his grotesque mixtures of Tragedy and Comedy in one piece; nor by the strained thoughts and affected witticisms which he sometimes employs. These we consider as blemishes, and impute them to the grossness of the age in which he lived. But he pleases by his animated and masterly representations of characters, by the liveliness of his descriptions, the

[1] *Supra*, p. 200. [2] *Lectures*, 22.

force of his sentiments, and by his possessing beyond all writers the natural language of passion : beauties which true criticism no less teaches us to place in the highest rank than Nature teaches us to feel."[1]

Allowing for the assumption that the narrow interpretation of the Unities is the true one (an assumption which Dr. Johnson's memorable preface had exploded), and for the other assumption that tragedy should altogether hold aloof from comedy, there is surely much here that is admirably well said.

Blair next proceeds to analyse the elements of which the pleasures of taste are compounded. That they are intangible and evanescent he freely admits. The feelings of taste "are engaging objects ; but when we would lay firm hold of them and subject them to a regular discussion, they are always ready to elude our grasp."[2] He concludes, however, that the main sources of these pleasures are sublimity and beauty, and he proceeds to discuss and illustrate these two qualities. I need not follow him farther into his disquisition than to note that, as a rule, he is singularly felicitous in his illustrative quota-

[1] *Lectures*, 24. [2] *Ib.* 25.

tions. It would be difficult to select a finer instance of the sublime than the two lines:

> "Ibant obscuri solâ sub nocte per umbram;
> Perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna."[1]

His illustrations are drawn from many and various sources. But he is never more happily inspired than in those he selects from Holy Scripture. We might, perhaps, have been able to spare some of the "examples of the sublime" with which, as he assures us, the works of Ossian abound.

Blair is equally deserving of attention in the subsequent divisions of his book. In handling the rise, progress, and structure of language he draws a judicious comparison between English and French. The latter tongue, he says, far surpasses ours in expressing the nicer shades of character, "especially those varieties of manner, temper, and behaviour which are displayed in our social intercourse with one another. Let any one attempt to translate into English only a few pages of one of Marivaux's novels, and he will soon be sensible of our deficiency of

[1] Virg. *Aen.* vi. 268.

expression on these subjects. Indeed no language is so copious as the French for whatever is delicate, gay, and amusing. It is perhaps the happiest language for conversation in the known world; but on the higher subjects of conversation, the English may be justly esteemed to excel it considerably."[1]

With regard to style he notes that perspicuity is the *sine quâ non*, and a virtue peculiarly necessary in philosophical writing. Synonyms are never true equivalents: they are really "varied by some accessory idea which every word introduces and which forms the distinction between them."[2] What says Mr. Raleigh? "Let the truth be said outright: there are no synonyms, and the same statement can never be repeated in a changed form of words."[3] The properties most essential to a perfect sentence, Dr. Blair observes, are (1) clearness and precision; (2) unity; (3) strength; and (4) harmony. Ornament should be employed very sparingly. But "to unite copiousness and precision, to be flowing and graceful, and at the same time correct and exact in the choice of every word, is

[1] *Lectures*, 96. [2] *Ib.* 108. [3] *Style*, 1897, 46.

one of the highest and most difficult attainments in writing."[1]

He comments upon the extreme artificiality of Shaftesbury's style, condemns the false ornaments of Hervey's: "the perpetual glitter of expression, the swollen imagery and strained description:"[2] and highly eulogises Addison's, minutely analysing four of his *Spectators*.[3] He discusses the diffuse style and the concise, the feeble and the nervous, and enumerates, in the ascending scale, the dry (exemplified by Aristotle), the plain (exemplified by Swift), the neat, the elegant, and the flowery or florid style; after which he passes on to Eloquence.

He draws attention to the extent to which the bounds of Eloquence at the Bar are now circumscribed. Lawyers must argue from strict law, statute, or precedent. Hence, knowledge more than oratory is become the principal requisite.[4] He deplores the practice of reading sermons as one of the greatest obstacles to the eloquence of the pulpit in Great Britain. His explanation of the decline of pulpit oratory appears to be satisfactory.

[1] *Lectures*, 112. [2] *Ib.* 212. [3] *Ib.* 225-261. [4] *Ib.* 297.

The sermons of the pre-Restoration English divines "were full of minute divisions and sub-divisions, and scraps of learning in the didactick part: but to these were joined very warm pathetic addresses to the consciences of the hearers in the applicatory part of the Sermon. Upon the Restoration, preaching assumed a more correct and polished form. . . . Whatever was earnest and passionate . . . was reckoned enthusiastic and fanatical."[1] Dr. Clarke abounds in good sense and the most clear and accurate reasoning; but he fails in the power of interesting and seizing the heart. "He shows you what you ought to do; but he excites not the desire of doing it. He treats man as if he were a being of pure intellect, without imagination or passions."[2] It is curious that Blair has not a word to say upon the "Presbyterian eloquence" of the seventeenth century. We must bear in mind that, when he lectured, it was by no means so conveniently accessible as it is now. But, if it had been, I suspect he would have ignored it, partly because it reeked of enthusiasm, partly because of its abundant

[1] *Lectures*, 341. [2] *Ib.*

solecisms in diction and offences against taste. He did not even think it worth while to refer to it as an example to be avoided.

The remainder of Blair's *Lectures* is occupied with a review of various kinds of composition in prose and poetry: which latter, by the bye, he defines as "the language of passion or of enlivened imagination formed most commonly into regular numbers":[1] perhaps as good a definition of the undefinable as any other, and certainly a better than the more famous one which represents poetry as "a criticism of life." This is perhaps the most interesting section of Blair's work, for his judgments, as a rule, are penetrating and sound, nor does he deviate much into the realm of the fantastic or the irrelevant.

In my last lecture[2] I cited to you some of his views on history, and I need only supplement what I then said by quoting his judgment on George Buchanan as an historian. "One cannot but suspect him to be more attentive to elegance than to accuracy.... When he comes to the transactions of his own times, there is such a change in his manner of

[1] *Ib.* 446. [2] *Supra*, p. 185.

writing and such an asperity in his style that on what side soever the truth lies with regard to those dubious and long controverted facts which make the subject of that part of his work, it is impossible to clear him from being deeply tinctured with the spirit of party."[1] I also brought to your notice the rather disparaging attitude he assumes towards fiction. But it is fair to mention that he praises Richardson and Fielding, and, although he has no great partiality for the mediaeval romances, his account of them is not altogether unappreciative nor unkindly. These writings, he says,

"displayed a new and very wonderful sort of world, hardly bearing any resemblance to the world in which we dwell. Not only knights setting forth to redress all manner of wrongs, but in every page magicians, dragons, and giants, invulnerable men, winged horses, enchanted armour, and enchanted castles; adventures absolutely incredible, yet suited to the gross ignorance of these ages and to the legends and superstitious notions concerning magic and necromancy which then prevailed. This merit they had, of being writings of the highly moral and heroic kind. Their knights were patterns, not of courage merely, but, of religion, generosity, courtesy and fidelity; and the heroines

[1] *Lectures*, 431.

were no less distinguished for modesty, delicacy, and the utmost dignity of manner." [1]

Best of all are his remarks upon the method of modern Dialogue-writers. The author sets up an A or a B, "who after mutual compliments and after admiring the fineness of the morning or evening, and the beauty of the prospects around them, enter into conference concerning some grave matter; and all that we know farther of them is, that the one personates the author, a man of learning, no doubt, and good principles; and the other is a man of straw, set up to propose some trivial objections; over which the first gains a most entire triumph, and leaves his sceptical antagonist at the end much humbled, and generally convinced of his error. This," he sums up, "is a very frigid and insipid manner of writing." [2]

Now, I have no desire to praise too highly the productions of our countrymen who gave a portion of their energies in the eighteenth century to a study of the principles of composition. I should be quite prepared to admit that the value of all their critical writing taken together is very much less than that of

[1] *Ib.* 443. [2] *Ib.* 436.

Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. But then Johnson, wisely, it may be, never attempted to digest and codify his critical views. The *Lives* sparkle with jewels of high price, but they are single stones, and the student will not find it easy work to arrange them symmetrically in a worthy setting. To compile a critical code is rather a thankless task. Impressions are apt to turn into dogmas; the tendency to petrifaction and rigidity is irresistible. But codification, however futile in the domain of law, may be very useful for all that in the domain of letters; and, once we admit that it is a legitimate operation, we shall find little difficulty in assigning a high place among its practitioners to Blair and Campbell, and a high place, though a lower one, to Kames and Monboddo. They must have materially assisted their countrymen in acquiring a familiarity with idiomatic English, and in so far as they achieved that feat they assuredly deserve a place in our memories and a share in our gratitude.

It used to be a point of honour with every self-respecting postilion to keep a trot for the avenue. In like manner every self-respecting

lecturer would fain close his course with a flourish upon some famous and attractive name. There are several writers in our period whose performances invite a peroration. There is Dr. Smollett, a staunch patriot, an ardent supporter of Lord Bute, and the mainstay of the booksellers in London. But his novels are, I trust, too well known to permit of any criticism upon them that could possibly be fresh or striking. Besides, except *Humphry Clinker*, they are singularly wanting in any characteristic Scotch local colour. Then there is James Boswell, a tempting enough subject. But, if it is to be the Boswell of the *Life of Johnson*, it would be waste of time to refute once more the antithetical ineptitudes of Macaulay. And if it is to be the Boswell of the *Letters*, and the Boswell of the writ, *Quare adhaesit pavimento*, it would be equally a waste of time to repeat in clumsier language what Mr. Elwin has said once for all.

Again, there is Henry Mackenzie, attractive for this, if for no other reason, that in his long life he witnessed the transformation of the Scottish capital—the calling in of the New Town to redress the balance of the Old.

But, bearing in mind in what University I find myself, I think it would be more appropriate to wind up with one of its most eminent teachers—I mean John Millar, who was Professor of Law in this College for forty years. He was born in 1735 to the minister of Shotts, and appears to have imbibed the philosophical though not the political principles of David Hume at an early age. This did not prevent his acting for some time as tutor in Lord Kames's family: though the venerable judge never failed to express unqualified disapprobation of Millar's doctrines.[1] He put on his advocate's gown in 1760, and sixteen months later, in 1761, was appointed to the chair of law in Glasgow, thus abandoning all his prospects, which are said to have been fair, of success at the Bar.

The eighteenth century was an age of eloquent and successful professors, and Millar was not the least eloquent and successful of their number. Jeffrey, whose father had forbidden him on political grounds to attend Millar's class, pays a glowing tribute to his merits as a lecturer in one of the early volumes

[1] Tytler's *Kames*, i. 200.

of the *Edinburgh Review*.[1] "The constant alacrity and vigour," he assures us, "of his understanding, the clearness and familiarity of his illustrations, and the great variety of his arguments and topics of discussion, together with something unusually animated and impressive in his tones and expressions, gave an interest and spirit to his living language that can scarcely be traced in his writings."[2]

Jeffrey is disposed to play the candid friend with regard to his written work. He allows him clearness and solidity; he acquits him of loquacity and absurdity; but he maintains that his style is heavy, cold, and inelegant, and lacking in variety and relief.[3] I think the great reviewer is a little too severe in his strictures upon the great professor. Millar incurred considerable odium by reason of his political views, but he stuck to them manfully, and is said to have borne "no great antipathy even to the name of a Republican."[4] He died in 1801, having given to the world an inquiry into *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771), *An Historical View of the English*

[1] Vol. iii. pp. 154 *et seq.*
[2] *E.R.* iii. 155.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ib.* 158.

Government from the Settlement of the Saxons in Britain to the Revolution in 1688 (1786), and a collection of letters (originally contributed to the *Scots Chronicle*) on *The Causes, objects, and consequences of the present War* (1796). To a posthumous edition of the *Historical View* were added in 1803 sundry Dissertations, and in particular one on the constitutional history of the country "from the Revolution down to the present time." This is, perhaps, the most interesting of all his writings.

The Letters on the War, which were dedicated to Mr. Fox, are, of course, purely partisan, and scarcely pretend to be anything else. They supply exactly what we might expect. There is the peevish animosity against Mr. Pitt, there is the rancorous malignity against Mr. Burke and the "ancient whigs,"—"*Old Truepenny*, reposing upon his pension, still swears against a *Regicide Peace*." He cherishes the agreeable delusion that the September massacres —"the bloody tragedy exhibited on the 2nd of September," as he justly calls them—were "the effect of sudden rage and resentment excited by the progress of the danger."[1] He

[1] *Letters of Crito*, 25.

admits that "every person possessed of common feeling must be shocked with a recital of" the "barbarities" of the Revolution: "human nature revolts against any attempt to excuse or to palliate them."[1] Need I say that he instantly betakes himself to the task of excuse and palliation? "A general course of extreme severity was rendered unavoidable, and it is not surprising in such a case," and so forth.[2]

He admits that in France "men of letters . . . have of late frequently admitted a vein of irreligion and scepticism into their writings." But he has the hardihood to say that "the genuine principles of Christianity are in no danger." The "adventitious trappings" of Christianity will be thrown away as mere useless rags. "Mysterious tenets, the invention of priestcraft in the dark ages, are likely to be exploded."[3] "The Roman Catholic superstition, that gigantic monster which has drunk so much human blood, that dragon which has long guarded the den of ignorance, and held more than the half of Europe in the chains of moral and political slavery, seems now to be fast approaching his last agonies."[4]

[1] *Ib.* 44. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ib.* 49. [4] *Ibid.*

But "the more the light of truth is spread over the world, the more clearly are mankind enabled to see their true interest; and the more will they be convinced of the utility of supporting a religion by which all the bands of human society are thus maintained and strengthened."[1] Millar, we surmise, would have heartily concurred with the character in *The Jolly Beggars* who opined that

> "Courts for cowards were erected,
> Churches built to please the priest."

He would have been no true Whig at the time of the great French War in whose political calculations panic-terror did not form an important factor. The last three years have been a period of uninterrupted defeat and disaster. The nation is plunged in despondency and dejection—is sunk in a stupid lethargy. France is bound to win. She will endeavour to exclude our commodities from all the foreign markets to which they have hitherto been carried. There is likewise ground to believe that she will send a great force to the West Indies, and attempt to conquer the British colonies in that part of

[1] *Letters of Crito.*

the globe.[1] After doing that, she will doubtless invade this island. For any sake, then, let us make peace. France will insist as a preliminary upon the instant dismissal of those at the helm. She is entitled to make the demand, and the demand should be granted. Whoever talks of a peace without this preliminary step is a mere party man, the adherent of "that miserable junto by whom the nation has been exposed to such dangers and involved in such calamities."[2] There is an exquisite satisfaction in recalling these dismal and pusillanimous predictions, for those at all events who happen to revere the memory of "the pilot that weathered the storm." But apart from the mere pleasure of the thing, they are significant as symptoms of Whiggery, and it is as a typical and thorough-going Whig that Millar possesses an interest and value for posterity.

Equally symptomatic is the contrast he draws between educated society in France and in England. In France, a philosopher "is no peculiar character, but corresponds to what we should call a gentleman."[3] In

[1] *Ib.* 90-92. [2] *Ib.* 97. [3] *Ib.* 4.

England, on the other hand, what is called a learned man, "instead of pursuing an extensive range of useful and ornamental knowledge, is frequently occupied merely in scanning Latin verses, and in acquiring a very minute acquaintance with two dead languages. He reads even Latin and Greek authors not for the sake of the information contained in them but on account of the classical purity of their compositions; and a public speaker often interlards his discourse with scraps of Latin sentences in which the thought, if expressed in his mother tongue, would seem unworthy of notice."[1] No ampler justification than this passage could be sought for Jeffrey's remark that Millar was the complete embodiment of the abstract idea of the Scottish philosopher as entertained south of the Tweed.[2]

In his treatise of the *Distinction of Ranks* Millar proposes to deal with "the circumstances which give rise to influence and authority in the different members of Society." In pursuit of this object he gives us chapters on the rank and condition of women in dif-

[1] *Letters of Crito.* [2] *E.R.* iii. 157.

ferent ages, and on the jurisdiction and authority of a father over his children, of a chief over the members of a tribe or village, of a sovereign over a society composed of different tribes and villages, and of a master over his servants. Under the last heading he draws attention to the curious spectacle afforded by the American Colonies. The same people, he points out, who talk in a high strain of political liberty, and who consider the privilege of imposing their own taxes as one of the inalienable rights of mankind, "make no scruple of reducing a great proportion of their fellow creatures into circumstances by which they are not only deprived of property but almost of every species of right. Fortune perhaps never produced a situation more calculated to ridicule a liberal hypothesis, or to show how little the conduct of men is at the bottom directed by any philosophical principles."[1] On this point at least Millar would have seen eye to eye with Dr. Johnson.

But the most suggestive chapter in the book is, I think, that on "the changes produced

[1] *Origin of Ranks*, 294.

in the government of a people by their progress in Arts and in polished manners."[1] That progress, in his view, which implies, as a condition precedent, the growth and diffusion of national wealth, is the solvent of those relations of dependency whether upon a monarch, as the apex of the structure, or upon an immediate superior, which formed the basis of the mediaeval polity. It is the chief cause of the development of popular liberty. "Wherever men of inferior condition are enabled to live in affluence by their own industry, and in procuring their livelihood have little occasion to court the favour of their superiors, there we may expect that ideas of liberty will be universally diffused. This happy arrangement of things is naturally produced by commerce and manufactures; but it would be as vain to look for it in the uncultivated parts of the world as to look for the independent spirit of an English waggoner among persons of low rank in the Highlands of Scotland."[2]

He returns to this topic in order to elaborate it with some care in the posthumous Disserta-

[1] *Origin of Ranks*, 220. [2] *Ib.* 241.

tion to which I have already referred. In thinly populated countries the people scattered in small villages find it difficult to resist the tyranny of the government. But,

"as the inhabitants multiply from the facility of procuring subsistence, they are collected in large bodies for the convenient exercise of their employments. Villages are enlarged into towns; and these are often swelled into populous cities. In all these places of resort there arises (*sic*) large bands of labourers or artificers, who, by following the same employment and by constant intercourse, are enabled with great rapidity to communicate all their sentiments and passions. Among these there spring up leaders who give a tone and direction to their companions. The strong encourage the feeble; the bold animate the timid; the resolute confirm the wavering; and the movements of the whole mass proceed with the uniformity of a machine, and with a force that is often irresistible."[1]

The labouring people in Britain have been raised to the enviable situation of being courted to accept employment instead of soliciting it. Hence it is that "the clamour and tumultuary proceedings of the populace in the great towns are capable of penetrating the inmost recesses

[1] *Historical View*, ed. 1803, iv. 135.

of administration, of intimidating the boldest minister, and of displacing the most presumptuous favourite of the backstairs." Similarly, "the voice of the mercantile interest never fails to command the attention of government, and when firm and unanimous is even able to controul and direct the deliberations of the national councils."[1]

He is a faithful disciple of Adam Smith. To him the theory of the balance of trade "appears now to be almost universally exploded."[2] He would have been surprised to note its recrudescence a century later, for he holds the view that, "when we give to our neighbours money for useful and marketable commodities, we obtain a real value and an adequate mercantile profit, no less than when we give commodities for their money."[3] He dwells on the phenomenon of the "division of labour" which was the necessary accompaniment of the industrial revolution; but he is by no means enamoured of its effects upon the working classes. You and I have long been familiar with comparisons drawn between the intelligent artisan or manufacturer of the towns,

[1] *Historical View*, 137. [2] *Ib.* 108. [3] *Ibid.*

with his keen interest in political affairs, and the dull agricultural labourer, to whom, in moments of baulked political ambition, it is customary to allude as a "chawbacon." It is curious to find that Millar took the very opposite view.

"The pin-maker who commonly lives in a town will have more of the fashionable improvements of society than the peasant; he will undoubtedly be better dressed, he will in all probability have more book-learning as well as less coarseness in the tone of his voice, and less uncouthness in his appearance and deportment. Should they both be enamoured of the same female, it is natural to suppose that he would make the better figure in the eyes of his mistress, and that he would be most likely to carry the prize. But in a bargain he would assuredly be no match for his rival. He would be greatly inferior in real intelligence and acuteness, much less qualified to converse with his superiors, to take advantage of their foibles, to give a plausible account of his measures, or to adapt his behaviour to any peculiar and unexpected emergency."[1]

This is the true explanation, he asserts, of "the common remark made by the English concerning the superior sagacity and cunning of their neighbours in the northern part of the

[1] *Ib.* 154.

island."[1] Manufactures are not so advanced in Scotland as in England. Consequently, "the man has not been so entirely stripped of his mental powers, and converted into the mere instrument of labour."[2]

A counterbalancing tendency to the growth of a spirit of independence and liberty since the Revolution is to be found in the growing influence of the Crown, which has indeed lost the prerogative of withholding assent from bills, but has acquired the more important power of proposing the laws; for most bills are introduced by the King's ministers.[3] This increase in monarchical influence is due partly to the increase in the national debt resulting from extravagant expenditure, partly to the patronage of which the King has the disposal; and the two causes act and react upon one another. In public expenditure "there is unavoidably a negligent waste, a precipitate rashness, from which those vermin who feed upon the necessities of their country enjoy a plentiful repast."[4] He offers in this connection a few observations which those who have discovered a cure for all our woes in the pro-

[1] *Historical View*, 152. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ib.* 99. [4] *Ib.* 85.

spect of every one becoming a civil servant might do well to ponder.

"The increase of the public revenue," he says, "may perhaps chiefly be imputed to the negligence and mismanagement incident to all extensive undertakings. Whoever considers the waste and bad economy which naturally takes place in managing the private estate of a rich individual; the idleness and embezzlement of servants; the inattention, the fraudulent and collusive practices of stewards and overseers, may easily conceive the still greater abuses that are likely to occur in managing the concerns of a great empire. As there a strict oversight is impossible, all the servants in the various departments of government are left in some measure to their own discretion; and are at liberty to practise innumerable expedients for promoting their own interest. They will endeavour therefore, we may suppose, to improve their situation in two different ways: first by laying hold of every pretence and employing every method to increase their perquisites and emoluments; secondly, by doing as little as they possibly can without incurring either punishment or censure; so that, in order to supply their deficiencies, a variety of assistants and inspectors must be appointed. The expense of administration is thus necessarily augmented, both by a needless multiplication of the offices in the service of the government, and by bestowing upon them a greater income than the performance of their public duty gives them any

right to demand. To what a monstrous height has this abuse, which has continued for more than a century been at length carried! How many officers in Church and State obtain immense fortunes from the public for doing no work or next to none! How many are often employed to perform a duty which might easily be performed by a single person! The tendency of this to increase the patronage and consequently the influence of the crown is too obvious to require illustration."[1]

The dangers arising from the state of matters he has described he conceives to be aggravated by the manner and habits of a people whose ruling principle is avarice, and whose distinguishing feature is justice, equally opposed to dishonesty on the one hand and to generosity on the other; "not that nice and delicate justice, the offspring of refined humanity, but that coarse though useful virtue, the guardian of contracts and promises, whose guide is the square and the compass, and whose protection is the gallows."[2] It is interesting to compare the remark of the late Mr. Maitland that throughout the history of English ethics there runs "a tendency to resolve all duties into the duties of speaking the truth and fulfilling con-

[1] *Historical View*, 92. [2] *Ib.* 94.

tracts";[1] and you will recollect the salutary dictum of Lord Kames, that justice is an infinitely more important virtue for the welfare of the state than generosity.[2]

Millar belongs to the hard-headed, and, some will say, hard-hearted, school of political philosophers. On one topic alone does he melt. His style becomes positively lyrical when intoxicating liquor is the matter in hand. "The poor savage," he says, "who . . . if not roused to exertion for the relief of his own wants, passes many a tiresome melancholy hour, flies with avidity to this terrestrial nectar, which creates a new world before his eyes, makes all nature smile and dance around him, and at length steeps his senses in a grateful oblivion of his miserable existence."[3] "We cannot, however," he warns us, "expect that the mirth which rises from the enchanted cup will be always the most refined or polished; or that it will not exceed the bounds of decency and decorum. . . . The modest Graces wing their flight from the revels of Bacchus, and are succeeded by loose riot and disorder,

[1] *Collected Papers*, i. 13. [2] *Essays*, 69.
[3] *Historical View*, iv. 207.

by rude and boisterous disputes, and by groundless and unmeaning though sometimes fatal quarrels."[1] Yet he would not deprive the poor man of his beer. Drink affords a healing balsam to the toils and cares of the labouring classes, "and our fellow feelings must reclaim against that rigid severity which would altogether deny this consolation to a class of men by whose painful exertions the prosperity of every state is principally supported, and the rest of the society maintained in ease and affluence."[2]

On all other subjects he is adamant itself. He will tolerate no nonsense, for example, about the equal distribution of property. "Any attempt upon the part of the public to limit the free accumulation of wealth would be fatal," he predicts, "to that industry or exertion which is the foundation of national prosperity. Sound policy requires that every man should feel a continual spur to his activity from the prospect of enjoying at pleasure and disposing of the fruits of his industry."[3] In spite of views which to his contemporaries appeared extreme, there was never any mind

[1] *Historical View*, 208. [2] *Ib.* 209. [3] *Ib.* 129.

(to quote Lord Jeffrey's language) "less accessible to the illusions of that sentimental and ridiculous philanthropy which has led so many to the adoption of popular principles. He took a very cool and practical view of the condition of society; and neither wept over the imaginary miseries of the lower orders nor shuddered at the imputed vices of the higher. He laughed at the dreams of perfectibility, and looked with profound contempt upon all those puerile schemes of equality which threatened to subvert the distinctions of property or to degrade the natural aristocracy of virtues and of talents."[1]

The same vivacious critic has pointed out his failings with laudable candour. His confidence in his own infallibility was greater than could always be justified. He was too cocksure: almost as cocksure as Jeffrey himself. "He sometimes cut the knot which he could not untie, and disregarded difficulties which he was not prepared to overcome. He has asserted where he ought to have proved, advanced a conjecture for a certainty, and given the signal of triumph when the victory

[1] *E.R.* iii. 158.

might be considered as doubtful."[1] Above all, "he wondered at nothing; and has done more to repress the ignorant admiration of others than most of his contemporaries."[2] This admission alone is enough to exclude him from the ranks of thinkers of the highest order. Its substantial correctness is indisputable. But for all that, many men more shallow and superficial than he have won for themselves a high reputation. If not strictly original, he was at all events independent and courageous; he expressed the opinions he had formed if without much elegance yet with spirit and force; and he is well entitled to an honourable niche in the temple of the Utilitarian philosophy.

We have now arrived at the end of the course which I proposed, and no one can be more sensible than the lecturer himself of its imperfections and deficiencies. When I began its preparation, I had a vague idea that the material might be too scanty, at least as regards the seventeenth century; but it proved to be more than abundant, and there are portions of it which admit of more elaborate and detailed

[1] *E.R.* 157. [2] *Ib.* 156.

treatment than I have found it in my power to bestow. We have seen how at the beginning of the selected period there was a Scottish literary dialect; how it gradually faded away into the vernacular of every-day life; and how it was supplanted first by the stately and measured Jacobean prose, and then by the less formal style of which Dryden is the generally accredited sponsor. We have watched the indefatigable efforts of Scotsmen of ability to write idiomatic prose of the modern kind, and we have marked the gratifying success with which these exertions were attended. It is true that we have neglected the great writers, to discuss whom would have been merely to give "a new toot on an auld horn," and not such a very new toot either. We have dwelt rather on authors of secondary rank, believing, not I trust without some ground for the belief, that a good deal that is significant and instructive may be legitimately extracted from their performances. And so we have reached a point at which to write tolerable English, free from Scotticisms in vocabulary and phrase, can have been no great effort for a decently educated Scot.

It is not safe to judge everyone by Sir Walter, but apart from Scots words and expressions which he deliberately uses, and uses in inverted commas, so to speak, and apart from his obvious familiarity with Scots affairs, I am not aware of anything in his Miscellaneous Prose Works which bears the unmistakable stamp of his nationality. The same freedom from provinciality of style is found in Jeffrey, whose writing is admirably vigorous, lively, and precise. Thus the nineteenth century opened well for us, but I am afraid it did not live up to this auspicious beginning. The terrible tradition of forensic, professorial, and hortatory "eloquence" survived, and our countrymen continued to show a fatal susceptibility to the influence of bad models. For this, I think, we must chiefly blame the turgid and powerful rhetoric of Dr. Chalmers. It set a mischievous and curiously persistent fashion, from which we have only emancipated ourselves, if indeed we can be said to have done so, in comparatively recent times.

As for the lawyers, it is a good many years since they became business-like in their prelections, and I imagine that the majority of

professors have followed in their footsteps. That the simple manner is generally the best can scarcely be disputed. It is really more difficult to do well, but, done badly, it ends in nothing worse than baldness. The highly ornate manner, if it fails to come off, produces consequences that are nothing less than deplorable. There is something almost pathetic in reading many of the oratorical exercises of the past. We feel ashamed that they no longer stir our blood. But, standing where I now do, I am to make no apology for concluding with the words of a past-master in the old-fashioned florid kind, the late Lord Ardmillan. The passage I am about to quote occurs in the report of his Lordship's opinion in the cause which decided that this University, when transported to its new situation, was not entitled to the immunity from local taxation which in virtue of its charters it had enjoyed in the High Street. The decision was distressing, but the language of the good old man is well calculated to soothe any pain it might occasion, being at once consolatory and reassuring.

"The University of Glasgow," he says in

his peroration, "at once venerable and vigorous, with glorious traditions, and unabated power and spirit, is planted in the midst of a great city and district peculiarly distinguished by the enlightened appreciation and generous support of her literary institutions. *Non eget Mauris jaculis.* She requires no adventitious aid to sustain her in the prosperous and distinguished course pursued for ages within the venerable walls which she has quitted, and now sustained with undiminished honour in the noble structure reared at Gilmorehill."[1]

[1] *University of Glasgow v. Kirkwood*, Session Cases, 10 MacP., 1000, at p. 1013.

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